

# Numbers 19 Commentary

PREVIOUS [Numbers: Journey to God's Rest-Land by Irving Jensen- used by permission](#)

NEXT

Source: Ryrie Study Bible

THE BOOK OF NUMBERS "Wilderness Wandering"								
WALKING Numbers 1-12			WANDERING Numbers 13-25			WAITING Numbers 26-36		
Counting & Camping Nu 1-4	Cleansing & Congregation Nu 5-8	Carping & Complaining Nu 9-12	12 Spies & Death in Desert Nu 13-16	<a href="#">Aaron</a> & Levites in Wilderness Nu 17-18	Serpent of Brass & Story of Balaam Nu 21-25	Second Census 7 Laws of Israel Nu 26-30	Last Days of Moses as Leader Nu 31-33	Sections, Sanctuaries & Settlements Nu 34-36
Law & Order			Rebellion & Disorder			New Laws for the New Order		
Old Generation			Tragic Transition			New Generation		
Preparation for the Journey: Moving Out			Participation in the Journey: Moving On			Prize at end of the Journey: Moving In		
At Sinai <a href="#">Mt Sinai</a>			To <a href="#">Moab</a> <a href="#">Mt Hor</a>			At <a href="#">Moab</a> <a href="#">Mt Nebo</a>		
En Route to <a href="#">Kadesh</a> (Mt Sinai)			En Route to Nowhere ( <a href="#">Wilderness</a> )			En Route to <a href="#">Canaan</a> (Plains of Moab)		
A Few Weeks to 2 Months			38 years, 3 months, 10 days			A Few Months		
Christ in Numbers = Our "Lifted-up One" (Nu 21:9, cp Jn 3:14-15)								
Author: <a href="#">Moses</a>								

**Numbers 19:1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying,**

- [Numbers 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Setting the stage** - Numbers 15-19 occurred during 38 years of wilderness wandering, which obviously is only described in part but is largely passed over. Given the population of the first generation these years of wandering would mean there would be an average of 100 deaths per day for the next 38 years and touching a dead body brought uncleanness. Even living in the same tent where someone died made all the occupants unclean. So God in His mercy provides them a way of restoration in the form of the unique provision of the ashes of a red heifer which is the essence of the story in Numbers 19.

**Related Passage:**

Numbers 5:2-4+ "Command the sons of Israel that they send away from the camp every leper and everyone having a discharge and everyone who is **unclean because of a dead person**. 3 "You shall send away both male and female; you shall send them **outside the camp** so that they will not defile their camp where I dwell in their midst." 4 The sons of Israel did so and sent them outside the camp; just as the LORD had spoken to Moses, thus the sons of Israel did.

**Irving Jensen** has an excellent summary to set the context for this chapter - The section of Numbers having to do with the years of desert wanderings (Nu 15:1–19:22) opens with a reaffirmation of God's laws which would still apply to the Israelites when they reached Canaan (Numbers 15:1-41). The next three chapters (Nu 16:1-18:32) reaffirm God's need and choice of spiritual leaders, especially with reference to the service of the holy sanctuary. But all this time the race had been dying away, sometimes falling like flies, as in the case of the more than 14,700 who reaped the sudden judgment of God after Korah's rebellion. Masses of dead

bodies, whether dying from plague, war, or natural causes, were a common sight to the Israelites in their aimless desert wanderings. If the law as prescribed by Numbers 5:2–4 was to be fulfilled—and it had to be—the majority of the survivors, for the inevitable frequent defilement because of proximity to dead bodies, would find themselves more often outside the fellowship of the camp than inside. God was especially concerned now with the preservation and spiritual nurture of the rising generation who had not fallen under God’s judgment at Kadesh and who would soon be entering the promised land. Hence this new provision of cleansing—which also would remain as a “statute for ever” (Nu 19:10)—was the answer to the problem of the excessive presence of corpses, because of its easier and more efficient application. ([EvBC-Numbers](#))

**NET NOTE:** In the last chapter the needs of the priests and Levites were addressed. Now the concern is for the people. This provision from the sacrifice of the red heifer is a precaution to ensure that the purity of the tabernacle was not violated by pollutions of impurity or death. This chapter has two main parts, both dealing with ceremonial purity: the ritual of the red heifer (vv. 1–10), and the purification from uncleanness (vv. 11–22)

Here are the **key words** in Numbers 19

- **Unclean** 20x in 14v (4x as Uncleanness) - Nu 19:7; Nu 19:8; Nu 19:10; Nu 19:11; Nu 19:12; Nu 19:13; Nu 19:14; Nu 19:15; Nu 19:16; Nu 19:17; Nu 19:19; Nu 19:20; Nu 19:21; Nu 19:22
- **Sprinkle/sprinkling** - 6x in 6v - Nu 19:4 Nu 19:13 Nu 19:18 Nu 19:19 Nu 19:20 Nu 19:21
- **Water** - 12x in 10v - Nu 19:7 Nu 19:8 Nu 19:9 Nu 19:12 Nu 19:13 Nu 19:17 Nu 19:18 Nu 19:19 Nu 19:20 Nu 19:21
- **Purify/purification** - 7x in 6v - Nu 19:9 Nu 19:12 Nu 19:13 Nu 19:17 Nu 19:19 Nu 19:20
- **Heifer** - 5x in 5v - Nu 19:2 Nu 19:5 Nu 19:6 Nu 19:9 Nu 19:10

**Why this chapter is important** - Over a period of 38+ years, over **1.2 million people died** in the wilderness because of God’s judgment. The Israelites were continually coming into contact with dead bodies, which led to ceremonial uncleanness. Therefore, the Lord provided a means of purification so that those who came into contact with dead bodies might be cleansed. The provision given for the preparation of the “water of purification” (cf. Lev 12–15).

**Wiersbe** adds "In their daily lives, the Jewish people had to be sensitive to what was “clean” and what was “unclean,” for this determined their relationship to the Lord and the other people in the camp. God’s rule was, “You shall be holy for I am holy,” a statement found eight times in the Bible (Lev. 11:44–45; 19:2; 20:7, 26; 21:8; 1 Peter 1:15–16). The regulations about “clean and unclean” are spelled out in detail in Leviticus 11–15, telling the Israelites what they could eat, how they should deal with bodily discharges and infections, and what to do about dead bodies. Certainly there was a hygienic purpose behind these laws, but there was also a spiritual purpose: to teach the Jews the difference between holiness and sin and encourage them to walk in holiness." ([Be Counted](#))

**Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying** - In Numbers 18 Yahweh spoke to each separately but here to both together as the subject is of vital importance to both.

**Numbers 19:2** "This is the statute of the law which the LORD has commanded, saying, 'Speak to the sons of Israel that they bring you an unblemished red heifer in which is no defect, and on which a yoke has never been placed.'

- **This is the statute of the law.** Nu 31:21 Heb 9:10
- **a red heifer:** The following curious particulars have been remarked in this ordinance: 1. A heifer was appointed for sacrifice, in opposition to the Egyptian superstition, which held these sacred, and worshipped their goddess [Isis](#) under this form; and this appears the more likely, because males only were chosen for sacrifice. So Herodotus says, they sacrifice males, both old and young; but it is not lawful for them to offer females. 2. It was to be a red heifer, because the Egyptians sacrificed red bulls to the evil demon Typhon. 3. It was to be without spot, having no mixture of any other colour. Plutarch says, the Egyptians "sacrifice red bulls, and select them with such scrupulous attention, that if the animal has a single black or white hair, they reckon it [athuton,] unfit to be sacrificed." 4. Without blemish. (See note on Lev 22:21.) 5. On which never came yoke: because an animal which had been used for a common purpose was deemed improper for sacrifice. Nu 19:6 Lev 14:6 Isa 1:18 Rev 1:5
- **unblemished** : Ex 12:5 Lev 22:20-25 Mal 1:13,14 Lu 1:35 Heb 7:26 1Pe 1:19 1Pe 2:22
- upon which: De 21:3 1Sa 6:7 La 1:14 Joh 10:17,18 Php 2:6-8
- [Numbers 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE UNBLEMISHED

## RED HEIFER

**Heifer** is clearly a **key word** in Numbers 19 occurring 5x - Nu 19:2, Nu 19:5, Nu 19:6, Nu 19:9, Nu 19:10.

**This is the statute of the law which the LORD has commanded- Statute** ([chugqah](#); Lxx = [diastole](#)) is an ordinance, anything prescribed (the root verb [chaqqaq](#) has the primary meaning of engraving on a stone - Ezek 4:1, 23:14).

**Law** (instruction, teaching) ([08451](#)) **torah** from **arah** is a feminine noun meaning instruction, direction, law, Torah, the whole Law. As discussed above **arah** derives from a word that means to shoot an arrow, for a teacher aims to hit the target and achieve specific goals in the lives of the students. **Torah** refers to instructions from God to His people on how to live (cf [Job 22:22](#)), and this was to be a total way of life, permeating every decision, thought, deed, etc. Torah was given to make known the way we should walk. In Israel, parents (Pr. 1:8; 6:20) and wise persons (Pr 13:14; 28:4) were major sources of instruction for life. Rebels were not willing to accept God's instructions in any manner (Isa 30:8, 9). In a similar way, the scribes handled the torah deceitfully and falsely "'How can you say, 'We are wise, And the law of the LORD is with us'? But behold, the lying pen of the scribes Has made it into a lie." (Jer. 8:8). **Torah** is often found paired with other words or phrases - "**the word of the Holy One of Israel**" (Isa. 5:24), "**the word of the LORD**" (Isa. 1:10); "To the law and to **the testimony**" (Isa. 8:20). **Torah** depict priestly instructions in general or as a whole. The Lord rejected the priests of Israel for they had disregarded it -- "those who handle the law did not know Me" (Jer 2:8)

**Saying, 'Speak to the sons of Israel that they bring you an unblemished red heifer in which is no defect, and on which a yoke has never been placed** - Unblemished (*tamim*) means without physical defect and is translated in Lxx with [amomos](#) (**a** = without, not + **mos** = spot, blemish) the word used in a description of our redemption by the precious blood of "a lamb **unblemished** ([amomos](#)) and spotless, the blood of Christ." (1 Pe 1:19+) and because of His unblemished sacrifice "He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present (us) before Him holy and **blameless** ([amomos](#)) and beyond reproach (Col 1:22+, Jude 1:24+). Hallelujah! Since **defect** also refers to blemish the emphasis by the Lord is on an absolutely spotless **red heifer**. A **yoke** ([ol](#)) was a wooden frame or a bar placed on the neck of work animals (Dt 21:3, 1 Sa 6:7) to harness them for labor. So the animal could not have been used as a work animal (non-sacred purpose) and could not have given birth to offspring.

**NET NOTE** - The line literally reads, "speak to the Israelites that [and] they bring [will bring]." The imperfect [or jussive] is subordinated to the imperative either as a purpose clause, or as the object of the instruction—speak to them that they bring, or tell them to bring. The color is designated as **red**, although the actual color would be a tanned red-brown color for the animal (see the usage in Isa 1:18 and Song 5:10). The reddish color suggested the blood of ritual purification; see J. Milgrom, "[The Paradox of the Red Cow](#) (Num 19)," VT 31 (1981): 62–72. A bull could not be given for this purification ritual because that is what was given for the high priests or the community according to Lev 4.

**Mattoon** - Qualified, pure, red heifers were not in abundance. One white hair would disqualify the heifer. The Jewish Mishnah says only seven heifers have been offered in the history from Moses to the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. A heifer was offered right before the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D., according to the Copper Scroll of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

**Wiersbe** on why **red**? - The red color may point to the blood being shed, but perhaps the color speaks of the red earth out of which the first man was made (Gen. 2:7). The name "Adam" comes from the Hebrew word *adamah* which means "red earth."

**FSB** - Since red yarn is also added to the fire, the color may be specified due to its symbolic association with blood.

**Unblemished** (without defect or blemish, perfect) ([08549](#)) (**tamim** from the verb **tamam** = to be complete, entire or whole [literal sense in Lev 3:9, Ezek 15:5], refers to a action which is completed) has both physical (without defect) and spiritual (blameless, devout, upright) significance. **Tamim** has the fundamental idea of completeness or wholeness. **Tamim** deals primarily with a state of moral or ceremonial purity (e.g., animal sacrifices - 51x *tamim* refers to unblemished animals - Passover lamb in Ex 12:5+ picturing of course Christ sinless perfection - 1Cor 5:7, "knew no sin" = 2Cor 5:21+)

**Heifer** ([06510](#)) (**parah**) refers to a female cow, and heifers have not yet borne a calf. Israel was called a "stubborn heifer." (Hos 4:16). *Parah* is also used derisively of the rich, egocentric women of Bashan who were called "cows of Bashan." (Amos 4:1) The *parah* was never used as a sacrificial animal in the OT with the exception of the red heifer although it was not slaughtered at the brazen altar. Joseph interpreted the Pharaoh's dream about the seven fat cows and the seven skinny cows (Ge 41:2-27). And Job complained that the cows of the wicked never seemed to miscarry (Job 21:10). The Septuagint word is **damalis**, a female cow (used in Heb 9:13).

Gen. 32:15; Exod. 24:5; Exod. 29:1; Exod. 29:3; Exod. 29:10; Exod. 29:11; Exod. 29:12; Exod. 29:14; Exod. 29:36; Lev. 4:3; Lev. 4:4; Lev. 4:5; Lev. 4:7; Lev. 4:8; Lev. 4:11; Lev. 4:12; Lev. 4:14; Lev. 4:15; Lev. 4:16; Lev. 4:20; Lev. 4:21; Lev. 8:2; Lev. 8:14; Lev. 8:17; Lev. 16:3; Lev. 16:6; Lev. 16:11; Lev. 16:14; Lev. 16:15; Lev. 16:18; Lev. 16:27; Lev. 23:18; Num. 7:15; Num. 7:21; Num. 7:27; Num. 7:33; Num. 7:39; Num. 7:45; Num. 7:51; Num. 7:57; Num. 7:63; Num. 7:69; Num. 7:75; Num. 7:81; Num. 7:87; Num. 7:88; Num. 8:8; Num. 8:12; Num. 15:24; Num. 19:2; Num. 19:5; Num. 19:6; Num. 19:9; Num. 19:10; Num. 23:1; Num. 23:2; Num. 23:4; Num. 23:14; Num. 23:29; Num. 23:30; Num. 28:11; Num. 28:12; Num. 28:14; Num. 28:19; Num. 28:20; Num. 28:27; Num. 28:28; Num. 29:2; Num. 29:3; Num. 29:8; Num. 29:9; Num. 29:13; Num. 29:14; Num. 29:17; Num. 29:18; Num. 29:20; Num. 29:21; Num. 29:23; Num. 29:24; Num. 29:26; Num. 29:27; Num. 29:29; Num. 29:30; Num. 29:32; Num. 29:33; Num. 29:36; Num. 29:37; Jdg. 6:25; Jdg. 6:26; Jdg. 6:28; 1 Sam. 1:24; 1 Sam. 1:25; 1 Ki. 18:23; 1 Ki. 18:25; 1 Ki. 18:26; 1 Ki. 18:33; 1 Chr. 15:26; 1 Chr. 29:21; 2 Chr. 13:9; 2 Chr. 29:21; 2 Chr. 30:24; Ezr. 8:35; Job 42:8; Ps. 22:12; Ps. 50:9; Ps. 51:19; Ps. 69:31; Isa. 1:11; Isa. 34:7; Jer. 50:27; Ezek. 39:18; Ezek. 43:19; Ezek. 43:21; Ezek. 43:22; Ezek. 43:23; Ezek. 43:25; Ezek. 45:18; Ezek. 45:22; Ezek. 45:23; Ezek. 45:24; Ezek. 46:6; Ezek. 46:7; Ezek. 46:11; Hos. 4:16; Hos. 14:2

**Defect** (03971)(mum) means blemish and denotes physical defects - e.g. Daniel and friends "in whom was no defect" - Da 1:4+, and God's priest= "No man of your offspring throughout their generations who has a defect" - Lev 21:17, 18, 21, 23+). No moral defect (Job 31:7, 11:15, 32:5). Absalom was handsome and had "no defect" (1 Sa 14:25). The Shulamite woman was "beautiful...there is no defect." (Son 4:7). Walter Kaiser adds that "Animals offered as sacrifices to God had to be without spot or blemish (Lev 22:20, 21, 25+; Numbers 19:2; Deut. 15:21; Deut. 17:1). To offer anything less would be to disobey God and disregard the obvious teaching that man's substitute for his sins had itself to be totally blameless." (TWOT). The Septuagint translates defect here with the noun momos which meant blemish, defect, flaw and was used only one in the NT figuratively, of false teachers who mar the fellowship of believers (2Pe 2.13)

**Muum** 19x in 17v - blemish(2), defect(14), injured\*(1), injures\*(1), insults(1). Lev. 21:17; Lev. 21:18; Lev. 21:21; Lev. 21:23; Lev. 22:20; Lev. 22:21; Lev. 22:25; Lev. 24:19; Lev. 24:20; Num. 19:2; Deut. 15:21; Deut. 17:1; Deut. 32:5; 2 Sam. 14:25; Job 11:15; Prov. 9:7; Cant. 4:7

---

**Rod Mattoon** - This sacrifice was unique. It was the only one where the animal was required to be one color and where the animal was slain outside of the camp. The mature red heifer(at least 3 years old), was taken out the Eastern gate, across the bridge that spanned the Kidron Valley and was slain on an altar on the western side of the Mount of Olives. The priest would be able to view the Temple entrance when this took place and sprinkled the blood toward the Temple seven times. It was also the only sacrifice that was burned with cedar, hyssop, and scarlet wood. Its ashes then were preserved in a stone jar after the sacrifice was burned. Stone does not transmit ritual impurity. Some of these ashes were taken and mixed with water in a large cistern and the water was sprinkled with hyssop upon a person to cleanse them. David refers to this in Psalm 51.

Psalm 51:7—Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

How a person is "cleansed" is a mystery. Solomon himself did not understand the mysteries of the red heifer. The sacrifice of the red heifer was the only one that made others pure, but made the person doing the sacrifice impure himself. It purifies the impure and renders impure the pure.

The ritual points to the heart of the Gospel. The sinner must be cleansed in order to enter the presence of a holy God. The red heifer points us to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 9:13-14—For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: [14] How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

1 Peter 1:19—But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

The red heifer was killed on the outside of the camp on an altar of wood. Christ was slain on the outside of Jerusalem on an altar of wood, the cross.

The red heifer had no yoke placed upon it. Christ did not have to be restrained and controlled. He willingly gave His life for us. The blood of the red heifer was sprinkled toward the door of the tabernacle indicating that the offering was made to the Lord. The red heifer reminds us of the importance of the blood.

Hebrews 9:22—And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

1 John 1:7—But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

The one who did the cleansing to make others pure became impure. What a picture of Christ who became sin for us.

2 Corinthians 5:21—For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Rabbi Richman said, "In truth, the fate of the entire world depends on the red heifer. For God has ordained that its ashes alone are the single missing ingredient for the re-enstatement of Biblical purity and thereafter, the rebuilding of the Holy Temple." It is interesting to note that in the Koran, the Muslim Bible, the first book is called "Parah" which means "the calf." This book pertains to

the ashes of the red heifer. The Muslims believe that whoever finds them will rule the world.

---

## UNIQUE FEATURE THE RED HEIFER RITUAL

1. Animal was female not male
  2. Animal had to be a specific color (red), not any color as with Levitical sacrifices
  3. Animal slain outside camp, not at the brazen altar
  4. Animal slain by layman not the priest
  5. Animal's blood was not collected to be poured out on the altar, but was only sprinkled in part and primarily was burned with the carcass
  6. Ashes were mixed with water for waters of purification
- 

### QUESTION - [What is the significance of a red heifer in the Bible? Is a red heifer a sign of the end times?](#)

**Answer:** To meet the requirements of the Old Testament law, a red heifer was needed to help accomplish the purification from sin—specifically, the *ashes* of a red heifer were needed. The red heifer was a reddish-brown cow, probably at least two years old. It was to be “without defect or blemish” and to have never borne a yoke. The sacrifice of the red heifer was unique in the law in that it used a female animal, it was sacrificed away from the entrance to the tabernacle, and it was the only sacrifice in which the color of the animal was specified.

The slaughtering of a red heifer is described in Numbers 19:1–10. [Eleazar](#) the priest was to oversee the ritual outside the camp of the Israelites. After the animal was killed, [Eleazar](#) was to sprinkle some of its blood toward the front of the tabernacle seven times (Nu 19:4). Then he left camp again and oversaw the burning of the carcass of the red heifer (Nu 19:5). As the red heifer burned, the priest was commanded to add “some cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet wool” to the fire (Nu 19:6).

The ashes of the red heifer were collected and stored “in a ceremonially clean place outside the camp.” The ashes were used “in the water of cleansing; it is for purification from sin” (Nu 19:9). The law goes on to detail when and how the ashes of the red heifer were used in purifying those who came into contact with a dead body: “Whoever touches a human corpse will be unclean for seven days. They must purify themselves with the water on the third day and on the seventh day; then they will be clean” (Nu 19:11–12). The purification process involved the ashes of the red heifer in this way: “Put some ashes from the burned purification offering into a jar and pour fresh water over them. Then a man who is ceremonially clean is to take some hyssop, dip it in the water and sprinkle . . . anyone who has touched a human bone or a grave or anyone who has been killed or anyone who has died a natural death” (Nu 19:17–18).

The imagery of the red heifer is yet another foreshadowing of the sacrifice of Christ for believers’ sin. The Lord Jesus was “without blemish,” just as the red heifer was to be. As the heifer was sacrificed “outside the camp” (Numbers 19:3), Jesus was crucified outside of Jerusalem (Hebrews 13:11–12). And just as the ashes of the red heifer cleansed people from the contamination of death, so the sacrifice of Christ saves us from the penalty and corruption of death.

The red heifer ritual was established in the Mosaic Law; in the interval since that time, Judaism has added many standards to what was originally a straightforward, rather simple set of instructions. Talmudic tradition speaks of the type of rope the red heifer was to be bound with, the direction it was to face when being slaughtered, the words spoken by the priest, the wearing of sandals during the ritual, etc. The rabbinical rules listed many things that would disqualify a red heifer from being sacrificed: if she had been ridden or leaned on, if she had a garment placed over her, if a bird had rested on her, and if she had two black or white hairs, among many other conditions.

According to rabbinical tradition, there have been nine red heifers sacrificed since Moses’ time. Since the destruction of the [second temple](#), no red heifers have been slaughtered. The rabbi [Maimonides](#) (1135—1204) taught that the tenth red heifer would be sacrificed by the Messiah Himself. Those who anticipate the construction of a third temple are eager to find a red heifer that meets all the conditions, because the red heifer ashes will be necessary to purify the new temple. Many consider that the appearance of a red heifer will herald the construction of the temple and the return of Christ. According to the Temple Institute, a group advocating the construction of a third temple, a flawless red heifer was born in August 2018 in Israel.

According to the [futurist](#) timeline of eschatology, there will indeed be a third temple of God in Jerusalem. Jesus prophesied a desecration of the [temple](#) during the tribulation (Matthew 24:15; cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:4); for that to occur, there obviously will have to be a temple in Jerusalem to desecrate. Assuming that those who dedicate the end-times temple follow Jewish law, they will need the ashes of a red heifer, mixed with water, for the ceremonial cleansing. If a blemish-free red heifer has truly been born, it could be seen as one more piece falling into place leading up to the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. [GotQuestions.org](#)

- See also article in Wikipedia - [water of lustration](#).

---

## John Bennett - BRING THEE A RED HEIFER

As the Israelites wandered through the wilderness they could not avoid death. A whole generation would be wasted and their carcasses would fall by the way. Contact with death defiled the people and there was constant need for cleansing. God's answer was the red heifer.

Our attention is drawn to the animal, vv. 1–3, the anguish, vv. 4–7, and the ashes, vv. 8–10.

The animal was unique, and, of course, it speaks of our Lord Jesus. It was red—the Hebrew word comes from the root adam, reminding us of the true manhood of the last Adam. It was 'without spot', lit., perfect, complete, and had no blemish. Nothing good was absent and nothing bad was present. It had never been under yoke. Truly our Lord Jesus is the only Man who had never known the bondage of sin's yoke. He was never dominated.

The ritual regarding its death pictures for us the anguish of Calvary, vv. 4–7. The blood is sprinkled towards the tabernacle. Approach to God must be on the basis of sacrifice. The body of the heifer is then incinerated entirely. Two words signify to burn in the Hebrew language; one means 'to cause to ascend as incense'; the other indicates 'to consume entirely'. The latter word is used here. This surely points to the intensity of divine wrath experienced by our Lord Jesus at the hand of God. Into the burning are cast cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet, symbols of His dignity, lowliness and glory. Such an One bore the judgement. This sacrifice was unique in that no part of it was placed on the altar.

The ashes are evidence of judgement borne, and these are preserved for future use, vv. 8–10. They will be mixed with the water of separation and applied when the need arises for defilement to be removed. The death of Christ not only meets my need judicially but His death and judgement-bearing is the basis on which I find cleansing from defilement.

We too are passing through a defiling world, but, by one sacrifice, provision has been made for our entire wilderness journey. (Day by Day)

---

## Torrey's Topic summarizing Red Heifer

- To be without spot or blemish Numbers 19:2
- To be given to Eleazar the second priest to offer Numbers 19:3
- To be slain without the camp Numbers 19:3
- Entire of, to be burned Numbers 19:5
- Blood of, sprinkled seven times before the tabernacle Numbers 19:4
- Cedar, hyssop, burned with Numbers 19:6
- Ashes of, collected and mixed with water for purification Numbers 19:9,11-22
- COMMUNICATED UNCLEANNESS TO
- The priest that offered her Numbers 19:7
- The man that burned her Numbers 19:8
- The man who gathered the ashes Numbers 19:10
- Could only purify the flesh Hebrews 9:13
- A type of Christ Hebrews 9:12-14

## Related Resources:

- [Have any aspects of red heifer been fulfilled? Gotquestions](#)
- Chabad Knowledge Base [Red heifer](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Heifer, Red](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Red Heifer](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Red Heifer](#)
- Morrish Bible Dictionary [Red Heifer Heifer, Red](#)
- Hawker's Poor Man's Dictionary [Red heifer](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Heifer, Red](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Heifer red](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Red Heifer](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Red Heifer](#)

- Wilson's Bible Types [Heifer](#)

**Numbers 19:3 'And you shall give it to Eleazar the priest, and it shall be brought outside the camp and be slaughtered in his presence.**

- outside the camp:** Nu 5:2 15:36 Lev 4:12,21 13:45,46 16:27 24:14 Heb 13:11-13
- [Numbers 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ELEAZAR LEADS HEIFER OUT OF CAMP FOR SLAUGHTER

**And you shall give it to Eleazar the priest** - Recall that "Eleazar was given the grisly job of sifting through the ashes to gather the censers the men had used to burn the incense. The censers were to be melted down, hammered into sheets, and used to overlay the altar in the tabernacle." (Gotquestions) **Eleazar** was also in charge of the transportation of the tabernacle (Nu 3:32; Nu 4:16).

**Eleazar** in Numbers - 35x in 34v (Aaron 100x in 96v) - Nu 3:2; Nu 3:4; Nu 3:32; Nu 4:16; Nu 16:37; Nu 16:39; Nu 19:3; Nu 19:4; Nu 20:25; Nu 20:26; Nu 20:28; Nu 25:7; Nu 25:11; Nu 26:1; Nu 26:3; Nu 26:60; Nu 26:63; Nu 27:2; Nu 27:19; Nu 27:21; Nu 27:22; Nu 31:6; Nu 31:12; Nu 31:13; Nu 31:21; Nu 31:26; Nu 31:29; Nu 31:31; Nu 31:41; Nu 31:51; Nu 31:54; Nu 32:2; Nu 32:28; Nu 34:17

**And it shall be brought outside the camp and be slaughtered in his presence**- Slaughtered outside the camp whereas sin offering in Lev 4:12 was at the sacrificial altar. Both were burned outside the camp. The phrase **be slaughtered in his presence** implies it was not Eleazar who slaughtered the red heifer. Further the word for slaughter here (shachat) is not the same as used for slaughter for sacrifice ([zabach](#)) and of course the brazen altar was not used for the slaughter.

Phrase **outside the camp** - 28x in 27v - Ex 29:14; Exod. 33:7; Lev. 4:12; Lev. 4:21; Lev. 6:11; Lev. 8:17; Lev. 9:11; Lev. 13:46; Lev. 16:27; Lev. 17:3; Lev. 24:14; Lev. 24:23; Num. 5:3; Num. 5:4; Num. 12:14; Num. 12:15; Num. 15:35; Num. 15:36; Num. 19:3; Num. 19:9; Num. 31:13; Num. 31:19; Deut. 23:10; Deut. 23:12; Jos. 6:23; Heb. 13:11; Heb. 13:13

**Slaughtered** (slain, kill, offer) ([07819](#))([shachat](#)) means to slaughter, kill, slay and is used in both ancient and modern Hebrew. Swanson notes that shachat means "to take the life of a creature, implying the object being killed offers little or no resistance as in a battle or contest." Special uses of shachat refer to "beaten gold" in 1Ki 10:16-17 and 2Chr 9:15-16. **Shachat** found in Nu 11:22, Nu 14:16, Nu 19:3. (Most uses not surprisingly are in Leviticus) Numbers 14:16+ = 'Because the LORD could not bring this people into the land which He promised them by oath, therefore He **slaughtered** them in the wilderness.' In a sense they paid for their sin with the lives, although their blood did not atone for their sins, for only perfect blood of Christ atones for sins.

**NET NOTE** - The clause is a little ambiguous. It reads "and he shall slaughter it before him." It sounds as if someone else will kill the heifer in the priest's presence. Since no one is named as the subject, it may be translated as a passive. Some commentators simply interpret that Eleazar was to kill the animal personally, but that is a little forced for "before him." The Greek text gives a third person plural sense to the verb; the Vulgate follows that reading.

**Gotquestions** - The imagery of the red heifer is yet another foreshadowing of the sacrifice of Christ for believers' sin. The Lord Jesus was "**without blemish**," just as the red heifer was to be. (Nu 19:2) As the heifer was sacrificed "**outside the camp**" (Numbers 19:3), Jesus was crucified **outside** of Jerusalem (Hebrews 13:11-12+). And just as the ashes of the red heifer cleansed people from the contamination of death, so the sacrifice of Christ saves us from the penalty and corruption of death.

---

**Question:** [Who was Eleazar in the Bible?](#)

**Answer:** **Eleazar** was one of four sons born to Aaron, Moses' brother and [high priest](#) of the Israelites. Eleazar is featured often in the account of the Israelites' wanderings in the wilderness. Like his father and brothers, Eleazar was consecrated as a priest in service to the Lord (Exodus 28:1).

Eleazar and his brother [Ithamar](#) remained faithful in their service, but Eleazar's other brothers did not. Nadab and Abihu "offered unauthorized fire to the LORD" in the desert of Sinai (Leviticus 10:1; Numbers 3:4). Because they did not respect the Lord and honor His commands, God destroyed both of them with fire. Through Moses, God commanded Aaron, Eleazar, and Ithamar to refrain from mourning. They had been consecrated with oil and were to remain at the tabernacle on pain of death. God also gave them instructions to never drink alcohol when the time came to enter the tent of meeting and told them how to present the food offerings.

These men and their families were allowed to eat the leftover food offerings, provided they followed certain rules (Leviticus 10:12–15).

Eleazar eventually became the chief of all the Levites, the Israelite tribe God had set apart for priestly service, and he was put in charge of the workings of the tabernacle (Numbers 3:32; 4:16). While the Israelites wandered in the wilderness, Eleazar was responsible for offering sacrifices on behalf of the people (Numbers 19:1–8). When [Korah, Dathan, and Abiram](#) gathered 250 men and rebelled against Moses, God ordered Korah and the 250 men to burn incense before Him. God then judged Korah and his followers by sending fire to consume them (Numbers 16:35). **Eleazar** was given the grisly job of sifting through the ashes to gather the censers the men had used to burn the incense. The censers were to be melted down, hammered into sheets, and used to overlay the altar in the tabernacle.

In Numbers 20:22–29, on the day of Aaron’s death on Mount Horeb, Moses had taken both Aaron and Eleazar up the peak to transfer Aaron’s priestly garments to Eleazar. This gesture was a ceremonial confirmation that Eleazar was taking over for his father as high priest. Eleazar continued as high priest for the rest of his life, serving the Israelites as a mediator, adviser, and intercessor before the Lord. Eleazar commissioned Joshua as Moses’ successor and later helped with such matters as the division of land when the Israelites finally took possession of Canaan (Numbers 34:17; Joshua 14:1; 19:51).

Eleazar had a son named Phineas, who also served the Lord faithfully (see Numbers 25). Eleazar eventually passed away and was buried in Gibeah, the land that had been given to his son Phineas when the Israelites settled in the Promised Land. The high priest was chosen from Eleazar’s line for seven generations, until the time of Eli, who was of the house of Eleazar’s brother Ithamar. During the time of King Solomon, [Zadok](#) was appointed as the high priest, returning that office to the family of Eleazar (1 Kings 2:35).

There are seven other men named Eleazar found in the Bible, although none quite as noteworthy as Aaron’s son. Some were Levitical priests, one was of the same line as Jesus, one was known for having married and divorced a foreign wife, and one even fought the Philistines “till his hand grew tired and froze to the sword” (2 Samuel 23:10). You can read about each of these other men named Eleazar in 1 Samuel 7:1; 2 Samuel 23:9–10; 1 Chronicles 11:12; 23:21–22 and 24:28; Ezra 8:33; 10:2 and 25; Nehemiah 12:42; and Matthew 1:15. [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Numbers 19:4 'Next Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, and sprinkle some of its blood toward the front of the [tent of meeting](#) seven times.**

- **sprinkle:** Lev 4:6,17 Lev 16:14,19 Heb 9:13,14 Heb 12:24 1Pe 1:2
- [Numbers 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Leviticus 4:6+ and the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle some of the blood seven times before the LORD, in front of the veil of the sanctuary.

Leviticus 4:17+ and the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle it seven times before the LORD, in front of the veil.

Leviticus 16:14+ “Moreover, he shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the mercy seat on the east side; also in front of the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.

## SPRINKLING BLOOD SEVEN TIMES

**Next [Eleazar](#) the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, and sprinkle some of its blood toward the front of the [tent of meeting](#) seven times** - In this case the sprinkling is still from outside the camp but **toward the front of the tent of meeting** It that sense the direction of the sprinkling visually linked the ritual to the tent of meeting. A similar procedure of sprinkling blood by the priest was ordained to atone for unintentional sins of the priests (Lev 4:6+) and sins of the congregation (Lev 4:17+). Clearly Eleazar goes from outside the camp to the tent of meeting in the center of the camp.

Blood reflects life and sin is deadly and thus a life must be sacrificed and blood shed to atone for sin and that blood is then taken inside the camp and sprinkled "atones" for defilement (sin) associated with the tent of meeting.



**Constable** has an interesting note (confirmed by Nu 19:9 "it is purification from sin" and NET translation of Nu 19:17 "burnt for purification from sin" ) The sprinkling of the blood shows that this slaying was a sin offering. The animal died for the sin of the congregation."

**Brooks** - on significance of **seven times** - "Jenson points out that the number **seven** was often associated with completion, fullness, and perfection in the ancient Near East and the Bible. Consequently it was natural to link it with the divine. There were **seven** each of **branches of the golden lampstand** (Exod. 25:32-37), **annual festivals** (Lev. 23:4-34) of which **two lasted for seven days** (Lev: 23:6, 36), **years in a sabbatical cycle** (Deut. 15:1), **sabbatical years in a jubilee cycle** (Lev. 25:8), **sacrifices in some sets of offerings** (Num. 28:11, 19, 27; 29:2, 8; and double sevens: Nu 29:13, 17), and **sprinklings of blood** (Lev. 4:6; Num. 19:4) and oil (Lev. 8:11; P. Jenson, NIDOTTE, 4:34-35)." (Bible Knowledge Key Word Study)

**Seven** occurs 4x in Nu 19 - **seven times** here, and **seven days** once each in Nu 19:11, 14, 15.

Phrase **seven times** is found 32x in 30v most often in Leviticus (9x with **sprinkle** = Lev 4:6 Lev 4:17 Lev 8:11 Lev 14:7 Lev 14:16 Lev 14:27 Lev 14:51 Lev 16:14 Lev 16:19) - Gen. 33:3; Lev. 4:6; Lev. 4:17; Lev. 8:11; Lev. 14:7; Lev. 14:16; Lev. 14:27; Lev. 14:51; Lev. 16:14; Lev. 16:19; Lev. 25:8; Lev. 26:18; Lev. 26:21; Lev. 26:24; Lev. 26:28; Num. 19:4; Jos. 6:4; Jos. 6:15; 1 Ki. 18:43; 2 Ki. 4:35; 2 Ki. 5:10; 2 Ki. 5:14; Ps. 12:6; Ps. 119:164; Prov. 24:16; Isa. 30:26; Dan. 3:19; Matt. 18:21; Matt. 18:22; Lk. 17:4

**NT Parallel** - In the New Testament, Jesus Christ spoke of blood during the Last Supper. In sharing a final meal with His followers, He said the wine represented His blood that would be poured out for us (Luke 22:20+). His blood was the seal of the new covenant of grace (1 Corinthians 11:25). His death on the cross was the perfect sacrifice on behalf of the sins of humanity and served as a fulfillment of the ritual sacrifices of the Old Testament. ([GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org))

#### **Related Resource:**

- [What is the biblical significance of the number seven/7? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**Sprinkle** (05137) (**nazah**) means to spatter or sprinkle (Hiphil) blood, oil, water either with the finger (Lev 4:6+ , Nu 19:4) or a something used for sprinkling (Lev 14:7+ ). The other Hebrew word for sprinkling (**zaraq**) refers to more robust sprinkling (cf Ex 9:8). The majority of occurrences are in the **Hiphil stem**, and they denote ceremonial sprinkling of blood (Lev. 5:9), oil (Lev. 8:11) or water (Num. 19:18) by the priest. Most of the uses refer to sprinkling of blood in the context of ritual cleansing from sin. Gilbrant - In passages which describe a cleansing for the purpose of ordination, blood is used in combination with oil (Exo. 29:21). Water (Nu 8:7) or oil alone (Lev. 8:11) was also used to consecrate men and material for divine service. The word **nāzāh** indicates in part "how much" blood is sprinkled. It signifies a use of the fingers or of a sprinkling device (Lev. 4:6). (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary) **TWOT** adds "Sprinkling has reference to cleansing from sin (Isaiah 52:15; 1 Peter 1:2; Hebrews 9:13-14) to obtain ritual purity. Its primary significance derives from its reference to "blood" sprinkling. This particular root is used with blood sprinklings which are lighter both as to how much blood is sprinkled and as to what is expiated (e.g. Leviticus 4:6; Leviticus 5:9; Leviticus 14:7, 51; Numbers 19:4). Expiation for unwitting sin (Leviticus 4:6) and original sin (Leviticus 16:14) are thus interrelated and yet differentiated (i.e. by the relationship between the "sprinkling" and the "smearing" cf. qāran). The prophesied servant of the Lord although considered impure" was to "expiate" the sins of the Gentiles (cf. E. J. Young op. cit., Isaiah 52:15—this pronouncement is quite important (Acts 8:32-37)."

**Nazah** - 23x in 21v - splashed(1), splashes(1), sprinkle(16), sprinkled(4), sprinkles(1). - Ex 29:21; Lev. 4:6; Lev. 4:17; Lev. 5:9; Lev. 6:27; Lev. 8:11; Lev. 8:30; Lev. 14:7; Lev. 14:16; Lev. 14:27; Lev. 14:51; Lev. 16:14; Lev. 16:15; Lev. 16:19; Nu 19:4; Nu 19:18; Nu 19:19; Nu 19:21; 2 Ki. 9:33; Isa. 52:15; Isa. 63:3

**Brooks on sprinkling** - Since sprinkling blood here was specifically directed toward the tent, it symbolized the tent's purification from the uncleanness of the Israelites that is mentioned in the following verses. The sprinkling in the OT was a prototype of what Christ's sacrifice would accomplish. As a result of his sacrifice believers are sanctified (1 Pet. 1:2) and their hearts and consciences are cleansed by the spiritual sprinkling of his blood...

1 Peter 1:2+ according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and **be sprinkled with His blood**: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.

**Comment - Sprinkled** (4473) (**rhantismos** from **rhaino** = to sprinkle) means a scattering of drops of some liquid (usually blood, oil or water in Scripture) The corresponding Hebrew word (**nazah**) stresses the purpose whereas **rhantismos** stresses the process of sprinkling. **Rhantismos** is found four times in the

Greek translation of the Hebrew ([Septuagint](#)) to describe the "water of sprinkling" ([Nu 19:9](#)).

Hebrews 9:13-14+ For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer **sprinkling** those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh (EXTERNAL), 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience (INTERNAL) from dead works to serve the living God?

Hebrews 10:22+ let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Hebrews 12:24+ and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

**Cole** explains that "This was a ritual for purification, especially if someone had been defiled by touching a dead body. The author argues from the lesser to the greater. If these rituals could cleanse the flesh, **“how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”** Jesus Christ is the only one who could atone for man's sin, because He alone was a man without blemish in all that He did. Thus His blood can act as the substitute for the penalty that we deserve. ([Hebrews 9:1-14 God's Remedy for Guilt](#))

#### Related Resource:

- [What was the tent of meeting? | GotQuestions.org](#)

#### Spurgeon -

Under the old law men might be unclean who did not know it. A man might have touched a bone and not be aware of it, yet the law operated just as much: he might walk across a grave and not know it, but he was unclean. I fear that our proud sense of what we think to be our inward cleanness is simply the stupidity of our conscience. If our conscience were more sensitive and tender, it would perceive sin where now we congratulate ourselves that everything is pure. This teaching puts us into a very lowly place, but the lowlier our position the better and the safer for us, and the more shall we be able to prize the expiation by which we draw near to God.

The defilement was frequent, but the cleansing was always ready. At a certain time all the people of Israel brought a red heifer to be used in the expiation. It was not at the expense of one person, or tribe, but the whole congregation brought the red cow to be slain. It was to be their sacrifice, and it was brought for them all. It was not led, however, up to the holy place for sacrifice, but it was brought forth without the camp, and there it was slaughtered in the presence of the priest, and wholly burnt with fire, not as a sacrifice upon the altar, but as a polluted thing that was to be made an end of outside the camp. It was not a regular sacrifice, or we should have found it described in Leviticus. It was an ordinance entirely by itself, as setting forth quite another side of truth.

The red heifer was killed before the uncleanness was committed, just as our Lord Jesus Christ was made a curse for sin long, long ago. Before you and I had lived to commit the uncleanness, there was a sacrifice provided for us. For the easing of our conscience we shall be wise to view this sacrifice as that of a substitute for sin, and consider the results of that expiation. Sin on the conscience needs for its remedy the result of the Redeemer's substitution.

But while this red cow was slaughtered for all, and the blood was sprinkled toward the holy place for all, no one derived any personal benefit from it in reference to his own uncleanness unless he made a personal use of it. When a man became unclean, he procured a clean person to go on his behalf to take a little of the ashes, and to put them in a cup with running water, and then to sprinkle this water of purification upon him, upon his tent, and all the vessels in it. By that sprinkling, at the end of seven days, the unclean person was purified. There was no other method of purification from his uncleanness but this.

It is so with us. Today the living water of the divine Spirit's sacred influences must take up the result of our Lord's substitution, and this must be applied to our consciences. That which remains of Christ after the fire has passed upon Him, even the eternal merits, the enduring virtue of our great sacrifice, must be sprinkled upon us through the Spirit of our God. Then are we clean in conscience, but not until then.

Not all the blood of beasts on Jewish altars slain,  
Could give the guilty conscience peace or wash away the stain.  
Christ the heavenly Lamb takes all our sins away,

A sacrifice of nobler name and richer big than they.

-- Isaac Watts ([Play entire hymn](#))

Here is an excerpt from an [ISBE Article](#) giving more background on the practice of sprinkling in the OT...

**Sprinkling** (blood, water, oil) formed an important--if not the essential--part of the act of sacrifice. A consideration of the chief passages in the Old Testament will reveal the prominence and the significance of sprinkling as a feature of the sacrificial act. The significance of the sprinkling of blood is seen in the account of the establishment of the covenant between Yahweh and Israel (Ex 24:6-8). Half the blood was sprinkled on the altar as representing the Deity, while the remainder was put into a basin and then sprinkled on the people. This ceremony is a survival in a modified form of the communal meal in which the tribal god and his worshippers sat together and participated in the same food, and in this way came to possess the same life. The two-fold sprinkling of blood resulted in the establishment of an inviolable bond (Nu 18:17; 2 Ki 16:15).

In the account of the consecration of Aaron and his sons (Ex 29:16,20,21) the blood of the ram of the burnt offering was sprinkled on the altar, while the blood of the ram of consecration was put on the altar and sprinkled on Aaron and his sons and on their garments. Water of purifying was sprinkled on the Levites at their ordination (Nu 8:7).

Leviticus gives detailed information in regard to sacrificial sprinkling. In the case of burnt offering the blood was sprinkled round about upon the altar (Lev 1:5,11). The same practice obtained in the case of peace offerings, whether ox, lamb or goat (Lev 3:2,8,13). When a sin offering for sins inadvertently committed was made, the priest dipped his fingers in the blood and sprinkled it seven times before Yahweh, before the veil of the Holy Place (Lev 4:6). Elsewhere (Lev 16:11,15) we read that Aaron took the blood of the sin offering and sprinkled it with his finger upon the mercy-seat, eastward, 7 times (see also Nu 19:4).

Sprinkling constituted part of the process of purification. But it is obvious that the sprinkling, even in this case, was a religious act, and not part of the actual physical cleaning. A simple kind of sprinkler was made by fastening a bunch of hyssop to a cedar rod by a piece of scarlet thread or wool and then the patient was besprinkled 7 times (Lev 14:7), while oil was sprinkled with the finger, also 7 times, before Yahweh (Lev 14:16; see also Ex 12:22; Nu 19:18; Ps 51:7). The house in which the leper lived was disinfected in the same thorough manner (Lev 16:51).

In the case of persons who had contracted uncleanness through contact with a corpse, sprinkling with the "water of separation" was part of the process of cleansing. The water of separation consisted of the ashes of a red heifer (slain for the purpose) mixed with running water (Nu 19). A sprinkler was used as in the case of the leper (Nu 19:18). The final sprinkling--on the 7th day--was followed by a bath (Nu 19:19). The "tent" in which the corpse lay, together with all the contents, were thoroughly disinfected.

**David Brooks** on **some of its blood** (middadamah)—**Blood** sustains life (Gen. 9:4-5; Lev. 17:11), excess blood loss **defiled** a person (Lev 12:4), and human blood shed by murder **polluted** a land (Num. 35:33). God provided for prevention of accidental shedding of blood (Deut. 19:10) and for cleansing from innocent bloodshed (Deut. 21:9), divinely avenged the outright murder of his servants (Deut. 32:43), and ordered that humans exact capital punishment for murder (Gen. 9:5-6). Shedding animal blood might prevent divine execution (Exod. 12:13) and was used as a sign of a covenant with God (Exod. 24:8; Zech. 9:11). Perhaps it is because sin was punishable by death (Ezek. 18:4, 20) and a blood sacrifice "puts back into the hands of God a life contained in the blood" (B. Kedar-Kopfstein, TDOT, 3:248) that blood symbolizes a sinner's reconciliation to God. It also cleansed a leper who had been removed from the community of God (Lev. 14:6-7) and a polluted house that had been condemned (Lev. 14:51), consecrated the priest and his garments (Exod. 29:20; Lev. 8:30), atoned for, purified, and consecrated the altars (sacrificial: Exod. 30:10; Lev. 16:19; incense: Lev. 4:7; 8:15), and atoned for the Holiest Place (Lev. 16:16) and the temple of the future (Ezek. 45:19- 20). This is the only place where blood is specifically burned. Whether its residue survived in the ashes, this water mixed with ashes had the same property as blood: it both defiled and cleansed (Num. 19:19, 21). Blood was sprinkled on the bronze altar for burnt (Lev. 1:5), fellowship (Lev. 3:2), and guilt offerings (Lev. 7:2). Except for on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:19), the blood of the sin offering was not sprinkled on the altar, but poured out at the base (sin offerings of fowl were an exception [Lev. 5:9]). [dam] ([Bible Knowledge Key Word Study](#))

**Brooks** on **Sprinkle** (hizza)—Two words are used in Hebrew for sprinkling, [nazah](#) and [zaraq](#). **Water (Nu 8:7), blood (Lev. 14:6-7), anointing oil (Lev. 8:11), other oil (Lev. 14:10, 16), and a mixture of blood and anointing oil (Ex 29:20) were sprinkled in rituals.** In the Law, the word *nzh* is used for sprinkling blood of the sin (Lev. 4:6, 17; 5:9; 16:14-15), ordination (Exod. 29:19-22), and leper's purification offerings (Lev. 14:7). The word [zaraq](#) describes the sprinkling of the blood of burnt (Exod. 29:16-18; Lev. 1:5), fellowship (Lev. 3:1-2, 8), ordination (Lev. 8:24), guilt (Lev. 7:2), and firstborn animal offerings (Num. 18:17), but not of sin offerings.

**Sprinkling** cleansed (lepers by blood [Lev. 14:7]), purified (Levites by water [Num. 8:7]), consecrated (priests by blood [Ex 29:21] and altar by oil [Lev. 8:11]), and atoned (for the Most Holy Place by blood [Lev. 16:15-16]). The sacrificial altar was routinely sprinkled with the blood of the burnt (Lev. 1:5), fellowship (Lev. 3:2), and guilt offerings (Lev. 7:2). It was sprinkled with blood of the sin offering only on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:19) and on behalf of the very poor Israelite who offered birds for a sin offering (Lev. 5:9). Milgrom and Wright suggest that smearing blood on the altar purified it, but sprinkling blood consecrated it; however, sprinkling appears to do both in Lev. 16:19. They seem to be right that sprinkling the oil in Lev. 14:15-18, 26-29 consecrated the oil so that it could be used for purification, but this was for oil, not blood (J. Milgrom and D. Wright, TDOT, 9:301). [\[nazah\]](#) (Ibid)

---

**Question - [What was the significance of the sprinkling of blood?](#)**

**Answer -** In Exodus 24 we read of Moses sprinkling blood as an important part of a ceremony commanded by God. The context shares part of the reason for this ritual:

[Moses] got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the Lord. Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and the other half he splashed against the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, "We will do everything the Lord has said; we will obey."

Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words." (Ex 24:4-8)

The twelve stone pillars represented the twelve tribes of Israel. Animal sacrifices were made to the Lord, with half the blood thrown on the altar and half kept in bowls. Moses then read the Book of the Covenant to the people, and the people pledged their obedience.

After these actions, Moses sprinkled the blood from the bowls on or toward the congregation of people. This blood represented the sealing of a covenant or promise to the people of Israel. Because blood represents life (see Leviticus 17:14), its sprinkling on the congregation represented a vital commitment between God and His people.

This act would have connected with other uses of blood in Scripture as well. Abraham, the father of the people of Israel, used animal sacrifice. He also was the first to begin the covenant of circumcision, which was used as a sign of the covenant with the Lord (Genesis 15:11).

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ spoke of blood during the Last Supper. In sharing a final meal with His followers, He said the wine represented His blood that would be poured out for us (Luke 22:20). His blood was the seal of the new covenant of grace (1 Corinthians 11:25). His death on the cross was the perfect sacrifice on behalf of the sins of humanity and served as a fulfillment of the ritual sacrifices of the Old Testament.

Today, Christians no longer offer animal sacrifices involving blood, but instead have atonement through faith in Jesus Christ. He is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6) and the source of salvation (Acts 4:12). Through faith in Jesus Christ, any person can have everlasting life (John 3:16). "Jesus [is] the mediator of a new covenant, and . . . the sprinkled blood" (Hebrews 12:24). [GotQuestions.org](#)

---

**Related Resources:**

- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Sprinkle; Sprinkling](#) - see [excerpt](#) above
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Sprinkle](#)
- King James Dictionary [Sprinkle Sprinkled Sprinkling](#)
- Morrish Bible Dictionary [Sprinkling](#)
- Hawker's Poor Man's Dictionary [Sprinkle Sprinkling](#)
- Vines' Expository Dictionary [Sprinkle, Sprinkling](#)
- Wilson's Bible Types [Sprinkle](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Sprinkle; Sprinkling](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Sprinkling](#)

**Numbers 19:5** 'Then the heifer shall be burned in his sight; its hide and its flesh and its blood, with its refuse, shall be burned.

- Ex 29:14 Lev 4:11,12,21 Ps 22:14 Isa 53:10
- [Numbers 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Leviticus 4:11-12 'But the hide of the bull and all its flesh with its head and its legs and its entrails and its refuse, 12 that is, all the rest of the bull, he is to bring out to a clean place outside the camp where the ashes are poured out, and burn it on wood with fire; where the ashes are poured out it shall be burned.

### RED HEIFER BURNED

**Then the heifer shall be burned in his sight; its hide and its flesh and its blood, with its refuse, shall be burned-** This burning took place outside the camp (compare statement in Nu 19:7 "afterward come into the camp") and **Eleazar** had to personally witness the conflagration of the carcass. This strongly suggest Eleazar had someone (or more than one) assisting in the burning.

**Wenham** - Burning the blood, which was "the most potent cleansing and sanctifying agent," is unique here to the Old Testament

**Wiersbe** - The carcass with the blood was then burned, and the word used here is not the normal word for "the burning of a sacrifice."

**Guzik** - Unlike every other sacrifice in the Old Testament, the blood of the red heifer is burnt along with the sacrifice, instead of being completely drained out at the jugular. Blood was to be part of the ashes that would come forth from the burning of the carcass of the red heifer.

**Numbers 19:6 'And the priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet material, and cast it into the midst of the burning heifer.**

- Lev 14:4,6,49 Ps 51:7 Isa 1:18 Heb 9:19-23
- [Numbers 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### CEDAR, HYSSOP, SCARLET ALSO BURNED

**And the priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet material, and cast it into the midst of the burning heifer-** The same items are used in other purification rituals as in Lev 14:4+ "then the priest shall give orders to take two live clean birds and cedar wood and a scarlet string and hyssop for the one who is to be cleansed." (cf Lev 14:51–52).

**Eugene Merrill** on scarlet - Literally, "the red of worms," i.e., a dye from a crimson worm, so "scarlet stuff." (see [Psalm 22:6 - I Am a Worm](#)).

**NET NOTE** - There is no clear explanation available as to why these items were to be burned with the heifer. N. H. Snaith suggests that in accordance with Babylonian sacrifices they would have enhanced the rites with an aroma (Leviticus and Numbers [NCB], 272). In Lev 14 the wood and the hyssop may have been bound together by the scarlet wool to make a sprinkling device. It may be that the symbolism is what is important here. Cedar wood, for example, is durable; it may have symbolized resistance to future corruption and defilement, an early acquired immunity perhaps (R. K. Harrison, Numbers [WEC], 256).

**Scarlet** ([08144](#))([saniy/shaniy](#)) is a masculine noun always used for the color scarlet. In Isa 1:18 God says Israel's "sins are as **scarlet**" but promised that "They will be as white as snow." (the implication being that they would be forgiven if they repented and believed in the Messiah). See discussion of Tola above where we note these two Hebrew words occur juxtaposed in many of the passages in Exodus that describe the scarlet decorations of the Tabernacle.

**Saniy/shaniy** describes the **scarlet** thread on the twin Zerah, who was listed with his twin Perez in the line of Messiah, these twins being born to Tamar after Judah had illicit relations with her, thinking she was a harlot (Mt 1:3). In Josh 2:18 we see another harlot Rahab, where **saniy/shaniy** described the scarlet thread she was to show from her window so that she would be spared ("redeemed" so to speak) by the Israelites when they sacked the rest of Jericho. So in both of these uses we see the **scarlet** is part of the so-called "**scarlet thread of redemption**" which many writers see beginning in Genesis 3:15 (although there is no specific mention of a

scarlet color, there is an implication that blood was spilled to prepare animal skin coverings for Adam and Eve). The uses of **saniy/shaniy** in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers are essentially identical to the uses described in more detail under the word study of [tola](#). In Isaiah 1:18 Jehovah refers to Israel's "sins are as **scarlet** (saniy/shaniy)."

**Scarlet** - 42x in 42v - Ge 38:28; Ge 38:30; Ex 25:4; Ex 26:1; Ex 26:31; Ex 26:36; Ex 27:16; Ex 28:5; Ex 28:6; Ex 28:8; Ex 28:15; Ex 28:33; Ex 35:6; Ex 35:23; Ex 35:25; Ex 35:35; Ex 36:8; Ex 36:35; Ex 36:37; Ex 38:18; Ex 38:23; Ex 39:1; Ex 39:2; Ex 39:3; Ex 39:5; Ex 39:8; Ex 39:24; Ex 39:29; Lev. 14:4; Lev. 14:6; Lev. 14:49; Lev. 14:51; Lev. 14:52; Nu 4:8; Nu 19:6; Jos. 2:18; Jos. 2:21; 2 Sam. 1:24; Prov. 31:21; Cant. 4:3; Isa. 1:18; Jer. 4:30

**Scarlet** is translated in the Lxx with the adjective [kokkinos](#). from **kokkos** = kernel, grain, seed) (Latin = coccineus) means scarlet, crimson, red. In the neuter **kokkinos** is a substantive ("to kokkinon") referring to the scarlet cloth, dyed with kokkos, a scarlet "berry," which is actually the female of a scale insect that clings to oak leaves, dried and crushed to prepare a red dye (cp coccus [kermes] ilicis). **Kokkinos** is the Greek word used to translate the Hebrew word for CRIMSON (tola) in [Isa 1:18](#) and in that passage is a figurative description of our sins (they are "red like crimson [Hebrew = tola; Lxx = kokkinos]").

#### Related Resources:

- **W A Criswell's** classic [The Scarlet Thread Through the Bible](#)
- [Psalm 22:6 - I Am a Worm](#) which uses [tola](#) and paints a picture of the Messiah
- American Tract Society [Scarlet](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Scarlet](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Scarlet](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Scarlet](#)

**Guzik** - In Leviticus 14:4–6, each of these three items are used in the cleansing ceremony for a leper. Each of these items has a special significance.. **Cedar** is extremely resistant to disease and rot, and is well known for its quality and preciousness. These properties may be the reason for including it here—as well as a symbolic reference to the wood of the cross. Some even think the cross Jesus was crucified on was made of cedar.i. **Hyssop** was used not only with the cleansing ceremony for lepers, but also Jesus was offered drink from a hyssop branch on the cross (Matthew 27:48), and when David said purge me with hyssop in Psalm 51:7, he was admitted he was as bad as a leper.. **Scarlet**, the color of blood, pictures the cleansing blood of Jesus on the cross. **Scarlet** was used in the veil and curtains of the tabernacle (Exodus 26:31), in the garments of the high priest (Exodus 28:5–6), the covering for the table of showbread (Numbers 4:8), the sign of Rahab's salvation (Joshua 2:21), and the color of the mocking "king's robe" put on Jesus at His torture by the soldiers (Matthew 27:28).

#### Related Resources:

- R. K. Harrison, "[The Biblical Problem of Hyssop.](#)" [EvQ 26 \(1954\): 218–24.](#)
- American Tract Society [Hyssop](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Hyssop](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Hyssop](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Hyssop](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Hyssop](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Hyssop](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Hyssop Hyssop \(2\)](#)
- King James Dictionary [Hyssop](#)
- Morrish Bible Dictionary [Hyssop](#)
- Hawker's Poor Man's Dictionary [Hyssop](#)
- Smith Bible Dictionary [Hyssop](#)
- Vines' Expository Dictionary [Hyssop](#)
- Wilson's Bible Types [Hyssop](#)
- Webster Dictionary [Hyssop](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Hyssop](#)
- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica [Hyssop](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Hyssop](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Hyssop](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Hyssop](#)

- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Hyssop](#)

**Numbers 19:7 'The priest shall then wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward come into the camp, but the priest shall be unclean until evening.'**

- Nu 19:8,19 Lev 11:25,40 14:8,9 15:5 16:26-28
- [Numbers 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## RED HEIFER RITUAL MAKES ONE UNCLEAN

**The priest shall then wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward come into the camp-** This indicates that the priest burned the heifer outside the camp (where it was slaughtered).

In Hebrews we read

**For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp.** 12 Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. 13 So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. (Heb 13:11-13)

**but the priest shall be unclean until evening** - Compare Leviticus 11:25+ "and whoever picks up any of their carcasses shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening."

**Unclean** (make unclean) ([02930](#))(**tame**) means to become unclean or make unclean. To become ceremonially unclean. To defile oneself (Hos 5:3, 6:10, Ezek 20:30). A wife defiles herself by adultery (Nu 5:13, Jer 2:23 = speaks of Israel as God's wife who had defiled herself by her spiritual adultery with idols!, Ezek 23:13 = refers to Judah and in context to the 10 Northern tribes - both had defiled themselves). To defile (violate) a girl (Ge 34:5), a woman (Ezek 18:6) Qal: To become (cultically or ceremonially) unclean: a) men Lev.11:24-39 Lev.5:3 Lev 13:14, 14:46, 15:5, 17:15, 22:6, Nu 19:7, Hag 2:13 b) things Lev.11:32-38' so that uncleanness arises Eze.22:3 <> Nif.: defile, pollute oneself Hos.5:3 by Lev.11:43 <> Piel: Lev.13:441. dishonor: ravish (a girl) Ge 34:5; profane Eze.43:7 2. defile, profane: tabernacle Lev.15:31, land Lev.18:28 3. (cultically) defile: oneself Lev.11:44, a nazîr Nu 6:9, altar 2Ki.23:16, house of Yahweh Jer.7:30 4. declare unclean Lev.13:8-59 <> Pual: be defiled Eze.4:14 <> Hitp.: incur uncleanness, become unclean Lev.11:24 <> Hotpaal: be touched by uncleanness Deut 24:4.

**Tame** is translated in the **Septuagint** in Numbers 19 with the adjective **akathartos** in Nu 19:7; Nu 19:8; Nu 19:10; Nu 19:11; Nu 19:13; Nu 19:14; Nu 19:15; Nu 19:16; Nu 19:17; Nu 19:19; Nu 19:20; Nu 19:21; Nu 19:22 (Other uses of tame in Numbers - Nu 5:3; Nu 5:13; Nu 5:14; Nu 5:20; Nu 5:27; Nu 5:28; Nu 5:29; Nu 6:7; Nu 6:9; Nu 6:12). Akathartos means ritually not acceptable, defiled, unclean (as used in Acts 10:14, 28+). Everything related to idolatry was considered unclean (2 Cor 6:17). It is notable that **every** use of **akathartos** in the Gospels (19x out of 30 total NT uses) is applied to filthy demonic spirits!

**Numbers 19:8 'The one who burns it shall also wash his clothes in water and bathe his body in water, and shall be unclean until evening.'**

- [Numbers 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**The one who burns it shall also wash his clothes in water and bathe his body in water, and shall be unclean until evening-** This text indicates that Eleazar had at least one assistant to do the burning of the red heifer.

**Numbers 19:9 'Now a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and deposit them outside the camp in a clean place, and the congregation of the sons of Israel shall keep it as water to remove impurity; it is purification from sin.'**

τ πον καθαρ ν κα στα τ συναγωγ υ ν Ισραηλ ε ς διατ ρησιν δωρ αντιμο γνισμ στιν

NET Numbers 19:9 "Then a man who is ceremonially clean must gather up the ashes of the red heifer and put them in a ceremonially clean place outside the camp. They must be kept for the community of the Israelites for use in the water of purification— it is a purification for sin.

NLT Numbers 19:9 Then someone who is ceremonially clean will gather up the ashes of the heifer and deposit them in a purified place outside the camp. They will be kept there for the community of Israel to use in the water for the purification ceremony. This ceremony is performed for the removal of sin.

ESV Numbers 19:9 And a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and deposit them outside the camp in a clean place. And they shall be kept for the water for impurity for the congregation of the people of Israel; it is a sin offering.

NIV Numbers 19:9 "A man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and put them in a ceremonially clean place outside the camp. They shall be kept by the Israelite community for use in the water of cleansing; it is for purification from sin.

KJV Numbers 19:9 And a man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up without the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation: it is a purification for sin.

YLT Numbers 19:9 'And a clean man hath gathered the ashes of the cow, and hath placed at the outside of the camp, in a clean place, and it hath become to the company of the sons of Israel a charge for waters of separation -- it is a cleansing;

LXE Numbers 19:9 And a clean man shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up in a clean place outside the camp; and they shall be for the congregation of the children of Israel to keep: it is the water of sprinkling, a purification.

ASV Numbers 19:9 And a man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up without the camp in a clean place; and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water for impurity: it is a sin-offering.

CSB Numbers 19:9 "A man who is clean is to gather up the cow's ashes and deposit them outside the camp in a ceremonially clean place. The ashes must be kept by the Israelite community for preparing the water to remove impurity; it is a sin offering.

NKJ Numbers 19:9 `Then a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and store them outside the camp in a clean place; and they shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for the water of purification; it is for purifying from sin.

- **clean:** Nu 19:18 9:13 2Co 5:21 Heb 7:26 9:13
- lay them up: Nu 19:17
- **water to remove impurity:** That is, water prepared by being mixed with the ashes of the heifer, and set apart for the special purpose of being sprinkled on those who had contracted any legal defilement. To this rite the apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews. (Heb 9:13, 14) pointedly alludes: "For if," says he, "the blood of bulls and of goats," alluding, probably, to the sin-offerings and the scape-goat, "and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot unto God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." Nu 19:13,20,21 6:12 31:23,24 Lev 15:20 Zec 13:1 2Co 7:1
- [Numbers 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **WATER OF PURIFICATION STORED OUTSIDE IN CLEAN PLACE**

**Now a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and deposit them outside the camp in a clean place** The **ashes** are "dust-like ashes, not the heavy ash from the altar." ([CBC-Nu](#)) So clearly someone assists Eleazar in carrying out this instruction. It is interesting that they was a "clean place" outside the camp, but the main point is that the ashes of the red heifer were now "sacred" and had to be kept clean so that they would have their desired efficacious cleansing effect as described in the following passages.

**Merrill on outside the camp** - Once the animal, including its blood, was reduced to "the ultimate biodegradable condition" of a living being (Levine 1993:471), its ashes were deposited in a "purified place outside the camp," which almost seems like an oxymoron,



since being outside the camp is generally associated with defilement....These **ashes**, when mixed with water, could subsequently function as “an instant sin offering”; however, its de-defiling and de-sinful properties were activated upon use, not during the preparation process, which defiled its agents. Offering a sin offering was difficult and expensive; mourners needing purification after contact with their recently dead family member had in this “an alternate remedy which marked the seriousness of the pollution caused by death, yet dealt with it without the cost and inconvenience of sacrifice” (G. J. Wenham 1981:146). ([CBC-Nu](#))

**Ashes (0665) (eper)** "masculine noun meaning soil, ashes, dust. It describes loose soil or dirt put on a person's head to indicate mourning (2 Sam. 13:19; Ezek. 27:30). It is used in the phrase sackcloth and ashes (saq wā'ēpek, Isa. 58:5; Jon. 3:6). It describes the wicked figuratively as ashes under the feet of the righteous (Ezek. 28:18; Mal. 4:3). Humans are mere dust and ashes (Gen. 18:27). It is used to describe the ashes of the red heifer (Num. 19:9, 10) used in a cleansing ritual. (Baker) **NIDOTTE** - 1. An example of אפר, ashes, is its use in cultic sacrifice: “ashes of the heifer” (Num 19:9–10). 2. Most often the word is used in the mourning rite of putting ashes on the head (2 Sam 13:19), in combination with sackcloth (Esther 4:1, 3; Isa 58:5; Jer 6:26; Jon 3:6), or in the combination of dust and ashes (Job 42:6; Ezek 27:30; cf. Job 2:8). The Ezekiel passage is vivid with dust sprinkled on the head and the person rolling in ashes (Ezek 27:30). 3. Humiliation or contrition is expressed with this term. Job says, “I am reduced to dust (עפר) and ashes (אפר)” (Job 30:19; cf. 42:6). Abraham speaks of himself in God’s presence as “nothing but dust and ashes” (Gen 18:27). God reduced the people to a condition like ashes on the ground (Ezek 28:18), and the promise is that the wicked will be ashes under the feet (Mal 4:3 [3:21]). In a lament the author claims that he has been trampled in the dust (אפר) (Lam 3:16). 4. Two passages refer to the eating of ashes as food: one depicts distress and sorrow (Ps 102:9 [10]); another, the bare subsistence of an idol worshiper (Isa 44:20). 5. In a comparative sense, God scatters the frost like ashes (Ps 147:16), crowns are given instead of ashes (Isa 61:3), and in a disparaging comment, some maxims are proverbs of ashes (Job 13:12).

**Eper** - 22x in 22v - ashes(21), dust(1).Gen. 18:27; Num. 19:9; Num. 19:10; 2 Sam. 13:19; Est. 4:1; Est. 4:3; Job 2:8; Job 13:12; Job 30:19; Job 42:6; Ps. 102:9; Ps. 147:16; Isa. 44:20; Isa. 58:5; Isa. 61:3; Jer. 6:26; Lam. 3:16; Ezek. 27:30; Ezek. 28:18; Dan. 9:3; Jon. 3:6; Mal. 4:3

**And the congregation of the sons of Israel shall keep it as water to remove impurity; it is purification from sin-** NIV = "They shall be kept by the Israelite community for use in the **water of cleansing**; it is for purification from sin." NET has "water of purification"

**B H Carroll** has the following note - Regeneration consists of what, and what element of regeneration is typified by this water of purification? Give full explanation, using the following scriptures: Psalm 51:2; Ezekiel 36:25; Zechariah 13:1; John 3:5; Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:5; Hebrews 9:13.

**NET NOTE** - The expression לִמֵּי נִדָּח (léme niddah) is “**for waters of impurity**.” The genitive must designate the purpose of the waters—they are for cases of impurity, and so serve for cleansing or purifying, thus “water of purification.” The word “impurity” can also mean “abhorrent” because it refers to so many kinds of impurities. It is also called a purification offering; Milgrom notes that this is fitting because the sacrificial ritual involved transfers impurity from the purified to the purifier (pp. 62–72). The **ashes** were to be stored somewhere outside the camp to be used in a water portion for cleansing someone who was defiled. This is a ritual that was enacted in the wilderness; it is something of a restoring rite for people alienated from community.

**Gilbrant** - Although different from the sin offering illustrated in Lev. 4:1-5:13, the OT designates the red heifer ashes as a sin offering (Num. 19:9)."

**THOUGHT** - Water for washing is a picture of the Word of God (John 15:3; Eph. 5:25–27). The Word promises us cleansing because the blood of God’s Son was shed for us on the cross (1 John 1:5–2:2). The Word also provides cleansing for the inner person as we read it, meditate on it, and apply it to our lives. Why should we be defiled and defile others when God’s gracious cleansing is available? (Wiersbe)

John 15:3 “**You are already clean because of the word** which I have spoken to you. (Jn 13

John 13:9 Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head.” 10 Jesus said to him, “He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.”

Ephesians 5:25-27+ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 26 so that He might sanctify her, **having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word** 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

Titus 3:5+ He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the **washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,**

**Numbers 19:10 'The one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening; and it shall be a perpetual statute to the sons of Israel and to the alien who sojourns among them.'**

BGT Numbers 19:10 καὶ πλυνεῖ τὰ μίτια σου γων τὴν σποδὶν τῆς δαμλεως καὶ κθαρτος σται ὡς σπρας καὶ σται τοῦ υἱοῦ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ τοῦ προσκειμνοῦ προσηλτοῦς νμῖμον αἰον

NET Numbers 19:10 The one who gathers the ashes of the heifer must wash his clothes and be ceremonially unclean until evening. This will be a permanent ordinance both for the Israelites and the resident foreigner who lives among them.

NLT Numbers 19:10 The man who gathers up the ashes of the heifer must also wash his clothes, and he will remain ceremonially unclean until evening. This is a permanent law for the people of Israel and any foreigners who live among them.

ESV Numbers 19:10 And the one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. And this shall be a perpetual statute for the people of Israel, and for the stranger who sojourns among them.

NIV Numbers 19:10 The man who gathers up the ashes of the heifer must also wash his clothes, and he too will be unclean till evening. This will be a lasting ordinance both for the Israelites and for the aliens living among them.

KJV Numbers 19:10 And he that gathereth the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even: and it shall be unto the children of Israel, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among them, for a statute for ever.

YLT Numbers 19:10 and he who is gathering the ashes of the heifer hath washed his garments, and is unclean till the evening; and it hath been to the sons of Israel, and to the sojourner who is sojourning in their midst, for a statute age-during.

LXE Numbers 19:10 And he that gathers up the ashes of the heifer shall wash his garments, and shall be unclean until evening; and it shall be a perpetual statute for the children of Israel and for the strangers joined to them.

ASV Numbers 19:10 And he that gathereth the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even: and it shall be unto the children of Israel, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among them, for a statute for ever.

CSB Numbers 19:10 Then the one who gathers up the cow's ashes must wash his clothes, and he will remain unclean until evening. This is a permanent statute for the Israelites and for the foreigner who resides among them.

NKJ Numbers 19:10 `And the one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until evening. It shall be a statute forever to the children of Israel and to the stranger who dwells among them.

NRS Numbers 19:10 The one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. This shall be a perpetual statute for the Israelites and for the alien residing among them.

- **wash his:** Nu 19:7,8,19
- **it shall be:** Nu 15:15,16 Ex 12:49 Ro 3:29,30 Col 3:11
- [Numbers 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**The one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening; and it shall be a perpetual statute to the sons of Israel and to the alien who sojourns among them** - **The one who gathers** implies that this is another assistant to Eleazar. **Alien who sojourns** in Lxx is two words in Greek, *proskeimai* (to be closely attached in present tense) and *proselutos* (in NT one who has come over to Judaism).

**Constable - Ashes**, which normally defiled the clean, in this case purified the unclean. God, who is sovereign, has the authority to

abrogate what is normal.

**FSB** writes that "Everyone living in the promised land must purify themselves to prevent contamination of the sanctuary and its sacred space (Num 19:13); contamination can be spread within the community (Nu 19:13, 20; compare Nu 31:19)."

**THOUGHT** - This Old Testament provision for de-defiling and de-sinners foreshadowed the time when a fountain would be opened to cleanse the people from their impurities and sins (Zech 13:1). This was the psalmist's hope (Ps 51:2, 7), Isaiah's exhortation (Isa 1:16–18), and Ezekiel's promise (Ezek 36:25). Its fulfillment under the new covenant comes not by animal blood and water (Heb 9:13–14) but rather by Jesus' shed blood (1 John 1:7; 5:6; Rev 7:14). This cleansing is received by faith (Acts 15:9; 22:16; Heb 10:22) as a washing of the word (Eph 5:25–27) and cleansing by the Spirit (Titus 3:5). It is applied to the person who obeys the truth of the gospel (1 Pet 1:22). (Unger)

### Numbers 19:11 'The one who touches the corpse of any person shall be unclean for seven days.'

- **touches:** He who touched a dead beast was only unclean for one day, (Lev 11:12, 27, 39;) but he who touches a dead man is unclean for seven days. This was certainly designed to show the peculiar impurity and sinfulness of man, and the hatefulness of sin, seven times worse than the vilest animal! Nu 19:16 5:2 9:6,10 31:19 Lev 11:31 21:1,11 La 4:14 Hag 2:13 Ro 5:12 2Co 6:17 Eph 2:1 Heb 9:14
- **person:** Heb. soul of man
- [Numbers 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## TOUCHING A CORPSE

**The one who touches the corpse** (Heb - "the dead") **of any person shall be unclean for seven days** - Note person is actually the Hebrew word for soul of that person. I like that better as it reminds us of the defiling effects of sin as not external, on our skin, but internal, on our soul! As Peter exhorts us "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain (present tense = this is a lifelong fight, a good fight of faith, a daily leaning into the supernatural provision of power of the Holy Spirit!) from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul (THERE IS THE BATTLEGROUND - OUR SOUL)..". (1 Peter 2:11+) Touching a dead body in the OT was a shadow of the death dealing effects of sin (cf Ro 6:23+, James 1:15+) on the soul as described in the NT.

**THOUGHT** - What's picture/message of touching dead body? Obviously simply making contact with a dead body did not result in the Israelite dying, so what is the message? In the Garden, Adam's sin brought death (Ro 5:12+) and thus these instructions would remind the people of their sin, the defilement it brings and their need for cleansing (the need for a Savior!). Note that blood had to be shed to cleanse and restore the defiled person to fellowship with Yahweh. Availing oneself of the **water of purification** would bring ceremonial cleansing. The **sprinkling of the water** of purification reminds one of Ezekiel 36:25-27+ " Then (ULTIMATELY THIS WILL BE FULLY FULFILLED AT THE SECOND COMING WHEN "ALL ISRAEL WILL BE SAVED" - See notes on Ro 11:26; cf Zech 12:10-14+, Zech 13:8+) **I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.** Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes (GOD'S ENABLING POWER), and you will be careful to observe My ordinances (OUR DAILY RESPONSIBILITY TO DEPEND ON THE SPIRIT'S ENABLEMENT)." Is this not a foreshadowing of the Cross and of the Gospel which gives good news of cleansing by the atoning precious blood of the Lamb of God available to those who recognize that they are sinners and their defilement before God.

### [What Can Wash Away My Sin](#)

What can wash away my sin?  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;  
What can make me whole again?  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Oh! precious is the flow  
That makes me white as snow;  
No other fount I know,

Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

For my cleansing this I see—  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus!  
For my pardon this my plea—  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus!

Nothing can my sin erase  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus!  
Naught of works, 'tis all of grace—  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus!

This is all my hope and peace—  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus!  
This is all my righteousness—  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus!

**Guzik** makes an interesting point that "To be ceremonially unclean was not "sin," as we might think of it; it meant that one was barred from their regular fellowship with and worship of God, and their fellowship with God's people, until they were made clean. A wonderful parallel is found in John 13:5–11; if we are "bathed" by Jesus, we need only to have our feet washed, as they become unclean in the normal practice of life. Yet, if we do not let Jesus "wash" us, we have no part with Him. We must receive the beautiful once-for-all cleansing Jesus brings to us when we are born again; yet continually come to Him to be cleansed of the "day-to-day" things."

**Unger** - Contact with animal carcasses caused only a one-day impurity (Lev 11:24–40); however, contact with a human corpse caused a seven-day impurity (Nu 19:11). Other seven-day impurity situations required only a sin offering on the eighth day: a new mother (Lev 12:2), a person with gonorrhoea (Lev 15:13, 28), or a recovered leper (Lev 14:10). But contamination by a corpse was more severe, and thus it required sin offerings on the third and seventh days (Nu 19:12). (Ibid)

**FSB** - The seven-day length of time is common for purification procedures (e.g., Lev 12:2; 14:9; 15:13). A purification offering was required on the eighth day or later depending on the contaminating circumstances (Lev 12:1–8; 14:10, 21–23; 15:14–15, 28–29). To be purified by contamination from a corpse, washing with the ashes mixed with water on the third and seventh days is substituted for the offering.

**NET Note on of any person** - The expression is full: אִישׁ שְׂפָתָיו לְכָל (lékhol-nefesh 'adam)—of any life of a man, i.e., of any person.

**NET Note on unclean** - The verb is a perfect tense with vav (ו) consecutive; it follows only the participle used as the subject, but since the case is hypothetical and therefore future, this picks up the future time. The adjective "ceremonially" is supplied in the translation as a clarification.

---

## John Bennett - ASHES AND RUNNING WATER

In Leviticus 6:10 we read of 'the ashes of the burnt offering'. These speak of the intensity of the pleasure God found in the Lord Jesus. By contrast, the ashes of the red heifer speak of the intensity of wrath experienced on account of sin.

The ashes were kept in store for future needs, v. 9. Each time defilement occurred they would be employed in ritualistic cleansing in a striking way.

The ashes were mixed with running (or living) water and sprinkled on the unclean person, vv. 17–19. If the ashes speak of the sin-bearing of Christ, then running water speaks of the Holy Spirit applying the truth of these sufferings.

It is instructive that two sprinklings were needed—on the third day and on the seventh day, v. 19. There could be no cleansing without both applications.

This suggests to us two distinct ministries of the Holy Spirit with regard to the sufferings of Christ. First, there is a ministry of conviction, when the full horror of sin is brought home to the believer. It is only in the sufferings of Christ that we get a true appreciation of the dreadful character of sin. But then there is another ministry, that of confirmation. The Holy Spirit not only impresses upon us the terrible cost of sin to Christ, but also the fact that justice has been fully satisfied.

Scripture is full of examples of this double ministry. When David sinned, Nathan's first visit answers to the sprinkling on the third day. When the true character of sin was exposed to David and repentance had taken place, Nathan brought the message of assurance that forgiveness was granted—the sprinkling on the seventh day.

The Corinthians were unaware of the seriousness of sin in the assembly until Paul wrote his first letter—the first sprinkling. After godly sorrow had produced repentance, he wrote his second letter to assure forgiveness—the second sprinkling.

Perhaps we need the ashes and the running water today. The Holy Spirit would seek to apply these precious truths in order that defilement might be removed and communion restored. (Day by Day)

**Numbers 19:12** 'That one shall purify himself from uncleanness with the water on the third day and on the seventh day, and then he will be clean; but if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not be clean.'

- **shall purify:** "Yithchatta," literally, "he shall sin himself," i.e., not add sin, but take it away, purify. So we say to fleece, and to skin, which do not signify to add a fleece, or a skin, but to take one away. Nu 19:17,18 Ps 51:7 Eze 36:25 Ac 15:9 Rev 7:14
- **third day:** Nu 31:19 Ex 19:11,15 Lev 7:17 Ho 6:2 1Co 15:3,4
- [Numbers 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## INSTRUCTION FOR PURIFICATION

**That one shall purify himself from uncleanness with the water on the third day and on the seventh day, and then he will be clean; but if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not be clean** - The water of course refers to the water of purification, water mixed with ashes of the red heifer. As Brooks says "The seventh day did not automatically bring purification. Not time but washing (Lev. 14:9; Numbers 31:24), sprinkling (as here), and sacrifice (Lev. 12:6; 14:5-7; Lev 15:29; Num. 6:9) could cleanse. The seventh day was not magical, nor did God deem someone clean simply because the time had passed. Uncleanness had to be dealt with actively, not passively, according to his prescriptions."

**Wiersbe** - They would have to wait three days after their defilement and then go out of the camp with a ceremonially clean man to the place where the ashes were kept. The man would mix some of the ashes with running water in a vessel, dip hyssop into the water and sprinkle it on the unclean person. This would be repeated four days later on the seventh day. The cleansed persons would then wash themselves and their clothes and wait until evening to return to the camp.

[Jamieson](#) has an interesting note on the third day (be discerning) - The necessity of applying the water on the **third day** is inexplicable on any natural or moral ground; and, therefore, the regulation has been generally supposed to have had a typical reference to the resurrection, on that day, of Christ, by whom His people are sanctified; while the process of ceremonial purification being extended over seven days, was intended to show that sanctification is progressive and incomplete till the arrival of the eternal Sabbath. Every one knowingly and presumptuously neglecting to have himself sprinkled with this water was guilty of an offense which was punished by excommunication.

**NET NOTE** on **purify** - The verb is the [Hitpael](#) of  $\text{חָטָא}$  (*khata'*), a verb that normally means "to sin." But the [Piel](#) idea in many places is "to cleanse; to purify." This may be explained as a privative use ("to un-sin" someone, meaning cleanse) or denominative ("make a sin offering for someone"). It is surely connected to the purification offering, and so a sense of purify is what is wanted here.

**Brooks** notes on the **seventh day** - Jenson points out that the number **seven** was often associated with completion, fullness, and perfection in the ancient Near East and the Bible. Consequently it was natural to link it with the divine. There were **seven** each of **branches of the golden lampstand** (Exod. 25:32-37), **annual festivals** (Lev. 23:4-34) of which **two lasted for seven days** (Lev: 23:6, 36), **years in a sabbatical cycle** (Deut. 15:1), **sabbatical years in a jubilee cycle** (Lev. 25:8), **sacrifices in some sets of offerings** (Num. 28:11, 19, 27; 29:2, 8; and double sevens: Nu 29:13, 17), and **sprinklings of blood** (Lev. 4:6; Num. 19:4) and oil (Lev. 8:11; P. Jenson, NIDOTTE, 4:34-35). There were **seven days** in the ordination ritual for the priests (Ex 29:30), altar (Exod. 29:37), and courtyard (2 Chron. 7:9). For major impurities caused by infectious skin diseases (Lev. 14:8-9), contact with a corpse (Num. 6:9; 19:11; 31:19, 24), and bodily discharges (Lev. 15:13) including menstruation (Lev. 15:19, 28) and after-birth (Lev. 12:2), the period of uncleanness and/or cleansing was **seven days**. People with **seven-day uncleanness** made others unclean by contact, usually until evening (Lev. 15:5-11, 20-23, 27), but in one case for seven days (Lev. 15:24; note that excommunication was the penalty for careless treatment of this uncleanness [Lev. 20:18] since seven-day uncleanness was so serious). In cases other than bodily discharge, unclean people were isolated from the community (Lev. 13:46; Num. 31:19). Those with uncleanness until evening apparently did not spread their uncleanness by contact. The seventh day did not automatically bring purification. Not time but washing (Lev. 14:9; Numbers 31:24), sprinkling (as here), and sacrifice (Lev. 12:6; 14:5-7; Lev 15:29; Num. 6:9) could cleanse. The seventh day was not magical, nor did God deem someone clean simply because the time had passed. Uncleanness had to be dealt with actively, not passively, according to his prescriptions. (Ibid)

**ILLUSTRATION** - There is a well known story of an evangelist named **Alexander Wooten** who related a story from the days when he held tent meetings. On one occasion after a series of meetings was over, he was pulling up his tent stakes when a young man approached him and asked what he had to do to be saved. The evangelist answered responded, "Sorry, it's too late" which caused the young man to cry out "Oh no! Do you mean it's too late because the services are over?" The evangelist explained that it was "too late" because it had already been done. In other words as he explained "Everything that could be done for your salvation has already been done." After explaining Christ's finished work to the young man, he led him to saving faith. Our salvation is based on the covenant whose redeeming work is finished-on a sacrifice that has been offered once and for all, that is complete and perfect and eternal. ([Quoted by Warren Wiersbe in his comments on Dead John 19:28-30](#))

**Numbers 19:13** 'Anyone who touches a corpse, the body of a man who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from Israel. Because the water for impurity was not sprinkled on him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is still on him.'

- purifieth: Nu 15:30 Lev 5:3,6,17 15:31 Heb 2:2,3 10:29 Rev 21:8 22:11,15
- the water: Nu 19:9,18 8:7
- his uncleanness: Lev 7:20 22:3 Pr 14:32 Joh 8:24
- [Numbers 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **WILLFUL NEGLECT OF WATERS OF PURIFICATION**

**Anyone who touches a corpse, the body of a man who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from Israel. Because the water for impurity was not sprinkled on him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is still on him** - This passage addresses willful neglect of God's provision of the water of purification for anyone who comes in contact with a dead person.

**Wiersbe** - It was a very serious offense if a defiled person refused to be purified, because defiled people defiled the camp. God's presence dwelt in the tabernacle (vv. 13, 20) and He walked among the people (Lev. 26:11-12; Deut. 23:12-14); therefore, the camp had to be kept holy. Unclean people who refused to be cleansed were cut off from the nation (Num. 19:20) and stoned to death. ([Be Counted](#))

**Unger** - The person's neglect or refusal of the purification ritual was a high-handed sin for which sacrifice was no longer possible, since they had refused the means of grace.

**Cut off** means either banishment or execution and it is difficult to be dogmatic, although execution does admittedly sound extreme for the sin. However Ex 31:14+ (different context - the Sabbath, cf Ex 12:15+) says "'Therefore you are to observe the sabbath, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people.'" And recall that a man was stoned for gathering wood in Numbers 15:32-36+, which was probably an illustration of "high handed" or defiant sin just described in Nu 15:30-31+.

**Cut off from** - Phrase found 50x in OT - Gen. 17:14; Exod. 9:15; Exod. 12:15; Exod. 12:19; Exod. 30:33; Exod. 30:38; Exod. 31:14; Lev. 7:20; Lev. 7:21; Lev. 7:25; Lev. 7:27; Lev. 17:4; Lev. 17:9; Lev. 18:29; Lev. 19:8; Lev. 20:5; Lev. 20:18; Lev. 22:3; Lev. 23:29; Num. 4:18; Num. 9:13; Num. 15:30; Num. 19:13; Num. 19:20; Jos. 23:4; Jdg. 21:6; Ruth 4:10; 1 Ki. 14:10; 1 Ki. 21:21; 2 Ki. 9:8; 2 Chr. 26:21; Ps. 31:22; Ps. 88:5; Ps. 101:8; Prov. 2:22; Isa. 14:22; Jer. 7:28; Jer. 44:7; Jer. 47:4; Ezek. 14:13; Ezek. 21:3; Ezek. 21:4; Ezek. 29:8; Ezek. 35:7; Joel 1:5; Joel 1:9; Obad. 1:9; Hab. 3:17; Zech. 14:2; Mal. 2:12

**NET NOTE** on **shall be cut off from Israel** - It is in passages like this that the view that being "**cut off**" meant the death penalty is the hardest to support. Would the Law prescribe death for someone who touches a corpse and fails to follow the ritual? Besides, the statement in this section that his **uncleanness** remains with him suggests that he still lives on. (**ED NOTE:** The Septuagint translates **cut off** with the Greek ektribo which means to obliterate (as by rubbing), ruin, destroy used for example of the angels telling Lot "we are about to **destroy** this place" Sodom - Ge 19:13, cf Ge 34:30 "be **destroyed**," Ge 41:36 "may not **perish** during the famine").

**Numbers 19:14** 'This is the law when a man dies in a tent: everyone who comes into the tent and everyone who is in the tent shall be unclean for seven days.'

- [Numbers 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## HOW TO DEFILE AN ENTIRE TENT

Answer? Die in it!

**This is the law when a man dies in a tent: everyone who comes into the tent and everyone who is in the tent shall be unclean for seven days** - Impurity in the tent defiled the entire tent and everyone in the tent, whether you lived there or were just visiting! The message was that death was defiling.

**THOUGHT** - Impurity in our temple the body defiles the entire body. (1 Cor 6:18-20+).

**Brooks on the law** (hattora)—The well-known word **torah** can refer to unspecified precepts from God (Gen. 26:5; Exod. 18:16), customs (2 Sam. 7:19), or wisdom instruction (Prov. 1:8; 13:14). Usually, however, it refers to specified legislated ritual procedures (as here, and, e.g., Lev. 6:9; 13:59) and the Mosaic Law (Exod. 24:12; 2 Chron. 23:18) as a whole or in part (such as Deuteronomy, Deut. 1:5) in which there are individual commands (Deut. 4:44-45; 2 Chron. 19:10). The **torah** was recorded in a book for preservation (Dt. 29:21; 30:10). Reading it should lead to obedience, walking in God's ways, loyalty, and whole-hearted service to him (Josh. 22:5; 2 Kings 23:25). Consequently, the king should read it daily (Deut. 17:19), and the public should have it read to them (Deut. 31:12-13) in a clearly understood fashion (Neh. 8:8). If a person meditated in it constantly and obeyed it, he would have success in living (Josh. 1:7-8; Ps. 1:2-3). It is expected that those who knew it best should also know the Lord (Jer. 2:8). Discretion and understanding were needed to apply it to different contexts (1 Chron. 22:12). God would punish Israel for disobedience (Deut. 27:26; 28:58), for the laws of the **torah** were part of their covenant (Deut. 29:21; Ps. 78:10; Hos. 8:1). Obedience to the law could lead to refreshment (Ps. 19:7), guidance (Ps. 37:31), blameless living (Ps. 119:1), faithfulness in times of testing (Ps. 119:92), and peace despite pressure (Ps. 119:165). However, obedience to the law could endanger one's life (Ps. 119:109) at the hands of the ungodly. God's good gifts should motivate people to obey it (Ps. 105:42-45). In the future kingdom God's law will be taught to the Gentiles (Isa. 2:3). [tora] (Ibid)

[Jamieson](#) has an interesting note - The instances adduced appear very minute and trivial; but important ends, both of a religious and of a sanitary nature, were promoted by carrying the idea of pollution from contact with dead bodies to so great an extent. While it would effectually prevent that Egyptianized race of Israelites imitating the superstitious custom of the Egyptians, who kept in their houses the mummied remains of their ancestors, it ensured a speedy interment to all, thus not only keeping burial places at a distance, but removing from the habitations of the living the corpses of persons who died from infectious disorders, and from the open field the unburied remains of strangers and foreigners who fell in battle.

**Numbers 19:15 'Every open vessel, which has no covering tied down on it, shall be unclean.**

- Nu 31:20 Lev 11:32 14:36
- [Numbers 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## EVEN OPEN VESSELS DEFILED

**Every open vessel** (container), **which has no covering tied down** (fastened) **on it, shall be unclean** - Not only the tent and people in the tent by inanimate objects as described here. The exact significance or meaning of this is uncertain.

**Numbers 19:16 'Also, anyone who in the open field touches one who has been slain with a sword or who has died naturally, or a human bone or a grave, shall be unclean for seven days.**

- **touches:** Nu 19:11 31:19
- **a bone:** Eze 39:11-16
- **a grave:** Mt 23:27 Lu 11:44
- [Numbers 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## NATURAL OR UNNATURAL DEAD BODIES

## DEFILE ALONG WITH DEAD BONES & GRAVES

**Also, anyone who in the open field touches one who has been slain with a sword or who has died naturally, or a human bone or a grave, shall be unclean for seven days - Unclean for seven days** held true even with application of the waters of purification on the third and seventh days.

**Guzik** asks "What was inherently unclean about a dead body? Simply that death is the result and positive proof of sin (Genesis 2:15–17, Romans 5:12+). Death is like sin made visible. If someone touched the carcass of a dead animal, he was unclean for less than one day (Leviticus 11:24, 27, 39). But if one touched a dead human, he was unclean for seven days! Man is indeed greater than the animals—especially greater in sin. Our contact with a dead body also makes us unclean. In Romans 7:24, Paul cries out in frustration of defeat in sin: Who will deliver me from this body of death? We can only be delivered from the body of death if we receive and walk in the precious work of Jesus on our behalf (Ro 7:25, Ro 8:1)."

**NET NOTE** on **open field** - The expression for "in the open field" is literally "upon the face of the field" (עַל־פְּנֵי הַשָּׂדֶה), 'al péne hassadeh). This ruling is in contrast now to what was contacted in the tent.

**NET NOTE** on **unclean for seven days** - See Matt 23:27 and Acts 23:3 for application of this by the time of Jesus.

Matthew 23:27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are **full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness**."

Acts 23:3+ Then Paul said to him, "God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! Do you sit to try me according to the Law, and in violation of the Law order me to be struck?"

---

**Question:** [What did Jesus mean when He spoke of living water?](#)

**Answer:** Jesus uses the phrase "living water" in two instances in the Bible. The first instance is found in John chapter 4. Jesus was tired and sat at a well while His disciples went into town to buy food. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus asked her for a drink. The Samaritan woman was quite shocked because Jesus was a Jew, and Jews simply hated the Samaritans. Of course, she had no idea who Jesus was and asked Him how He could ask her for water since He was a Jew.

Jesus ignored the question and went right to the point, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water" (John 4:10). Notice that He does not say that He is the living water, but that He would give living water to her, and when she received it, she would never thirst again. Of course, that does not tell us what the living water is! For that, we must go to another passage of Scripture. In this case, Jesus is in the temple surrounded by a throng of worshipers. He suddenly cried out, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scriptures said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:37–39+, emphasis added).

Here Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as the living water. External influence of the Spirit had always been given in the conversion and sanctification of the Old Testament saints and prophets, but the gift of the Spirit who would indwell believers had not yet been received (Acts 10:44–45). So, though many people say that Jesus is the living water, Jesus Himself intended the phrase to mean the Holy Spirit who dwells in believers and seals them for salvation (Ephesians 1:13–14). It is the ministry of the Spirit, flowing out of a heart redeemed by God, that blesses believers and, through them, brings life and light to the world. [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Numbers 19:17** **"Then for the unclean person they shall take some of the ashes of the burnt purification from sin and flowing water shall be added to them in a vessel.**

BGT Numbers 19:17 κα λ μψονται τ καθ ρτ π τ ς σποδι ς τ ς κατακεκαυμ νη ς το γνισμο κα κχεο σιν π α τ ν δωρ ζ ν ε ς σκε ο ς

NET Numbers 19:17 "For a ceremonially unclean person you must take some of the ashes of the heifer burnt for purification from sin and pour fresh running water over them in a vessel.

NLT Numbers 19:17 "To remove the defilement, put some of the ashes from the burnt purification offering in a jar, and pour fresh water over them.

ESV Numbers 19:17 For the unclean they shall take some ashes of the burnt sin offering, and fresh water shall be added in a vessel.

NIV Numbers 19:17 "For the unclean person, put some ashes from the burned purification offering into a jar



and pour fresh water over them.

KJV Numbers 19:17 And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel:

YLT Numbers 19:17 and they have taken for the unclean person of the ashes of the burning of the cleansing, and he hath put upon it running water unto a vessel;

LXE Numbers 19:17 And they shall take for the unclean of the burnt ashes of purification, and they shall pour upon them running water into a vessel.

ASV Numbers 19:17 And for the unclean they shall take of the ashes of the burning of the sin-offering; and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel:

CSB Numbers 19:17 For the purification of the unclean person, they are to take some of the ashes of the burnt sin offering, put them in a jar, and add fresh water to them.

NKJ Numbers 19:17 `And for an unclean person they shall take some of the ashes of the heifer burnt for purification from sin, and running water shall be put on them in a vessel.

NRS Numbers 19:17 For the unclean they shall take some ashes of the burnt purification offering, and running water shall be added in a vessel;

NAB Numbers 19:17 For anyone who is thus unclean, ashes from the sin offering shall be put in a vessel, and spring water shall be poured on them.

NJB Numbers 19:17 'For someone thus unclean, some of the ashes of the victim burnt as a sacrifice for sin will be taken and spring water must be poured over them, in a vessel.

GWN Numbers 19:17 "This is what you must do for people who become unclean from touching a dead body. Put some of the ashes from the red cow that was burned as an offering for sin into a container. Then pour fresh water on them.

- **ashes:** Heb. dust, Nu 19:9
- **flowing water shall be added:** Heb. living waters shall be given, Ge 26:19 \*marg: Song 4:15 Joh 4:10,11 7:38 Rev 7:17
- [Numbers 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ASHES ADDED TO LIVING WATER

**Then for the unclean person they shall take some of the ashes of the burnt purification from sin-** Touching a dead body had heretofore not been directly connected with sin but only defilement or uncleanness. This passage brings sin into the equation. The **NET** version has "ashes of the heifer burnt for purification from sin." **ESV** has "some ashes of the burnt sin offering." **NLT** and **NIV** call it "burned purification offering" which indicates they are letting the Lxx guide their translation for Lxx has hagnisomos (only in Acts 21:26 in NT) instead of sin.

**And flowing water shall be added to them in a vessel-** **Flowing water** is literally "living water" in the **Lxx** = "*hudor zon* [present tense]" = literally "water continually living")

**THOUGHT** - The **flowing water** and **ashes of the burnt purification from sin** is a **foreshadowing** of the "**Living Water**" Jesus offered to the Samaritan woman at the well and has continued to offer to every despised "*Samaritan*" (which was all of us before we were clothed in the righteousness of Christ - 1 Cor 1:29-30) who has ever been born again (see commentary on John 4:10-11)

**Brooks** observes that "The only form in which a single slaughtered sacrifice could be kept on hand without putrefying and belying its purifying purpose was in the form of **ashes**. The continued presence and repeated usage of the ashes introduced the idea that one sacrifice can repeatedly cleanse—a concept that reached its fullest expression in Christ's sacrifice that repeatedly cleanses from sin (cf. 1 John 1:9)." I would add this parallels the truth in Hebrews 10:12+ when Jesus "having offered **one sacrifice for sins for all time**, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD."

**NET NOTE** on **flowing water** - The expression is literally "living water." Living water is the fresh, flowing spring water that is clear, life-giving, and not the collected pools of stagnant or dirty water.

**Ashes** (06083)(apar) means dust, dry earth, loose dirt. See more discussion by Brooks below. **Gilbrant**  
- Occurring over 100 times in the OT, the noun 'āphār means "loose soil" or "dust" (1 Ki. 18:38; Isa. 34:7, 9;

Amos 2:7), but it is also used of the "surface soil" of the earth (Exo. 8:16f) and the "material" of the earth as a whole (Prov. 8:26; Isa. 40:12), and it may refer to a "sand" storm (Deut. 28:24).

The noun occurs with a negative connotation of "dust" several times in the OT. For instance, dust is thrown in malice (2 Sam. 16:13), put on the head as a sign of grief (Josh. 7:6; Ezek. 27:30) and made into siege works (Hab. 1:10). It is seen as a token of punishment and humiliation upon the serpent (Gen. 3:14; Isa. 65:25). The noun 'āphār also refers to the powder of anything pulverized (Deut. 9:21) or to the debris of a ruined city (1 Ki. 20:10; Neh. 4:2, 10; Ezek. 26:4, 12). However, 'āphāl can also be used in a neutral sense: dust is a place to hide from God's glory (Isa. 2:10, 19) and it is the material from which the physical body of mankind was made, and to which it returns (Gen. 2:7; 3:19; Job 4:19; Ecc. 3:20). Further, 'āphāl can denote mortar used for plastering houses (Lev. 14:41f, 45), iron ore (Job 28:2) and gold dust (Job 28:6).

Figuratively, 'āphār is used of abundance (Gen. 13:16; 28:14; 2 Chr. 1:9; Job 27:16), including blood being poured out in such abundance that it becomes common and precious metals being heaped up to the point of worthlessness (Job 22:24; Zeph. 1:17; Zech. 9:3). Several times it is used as a simile. For instance, Abraham used it as a simile for self-abasement (Gen. 18:27), and it is used in a simile of the scattered or dispersed in 2 Ki. 13:7 and Isa. 41:2. It is further used as a figure of humiliation when it describes those who sit or lie in the dust (Job 16:15; Pss. 7:5; 44:25; 119:25; Isa. 47:1) or lick the dust (Ps. 72:9; Isa. 49:23; Mic. 7:17). The Scriptures say that Yahweh raises people from the dust (1 Sam. 2:8; 1 Ki. 16:2; Ps. 113:7), and God's people are encouraged to lift themselves up from the dust (Isa. 52:2).

A final area of meaning that is not easily separated is the distinction between "the earth of the grave" (Job 7:21; 20:11; 21:26; Ps. 22:15) and "the world of the dead" or "underworld" (Job 17:16; Ps. 22:29; Dan. 12:2). Yet it seems that these two ideas are possibly reflected in these passages. (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary)

**Aphar** - 103v - ashes(2), debris(2), dirt(1), dry soil(1), dust(91), dusty(1), earth(5), ground(1), heap(2), loose earth(1), plaster(3), rubbish(1), rubble(1). Gen. 2:7; Gen. 3:14; Gen. 3:19; Gen. 13:16; Gen. 18:27; Gen. 26:15; Gen. 28:14; Exod. 8:16; Exod. 8:17; Lev. 14:41; Lev. 14:42; Lev. 14:45; Lev. 17:13; Num. 5:17; Num. 19:17; Num. 23:10; Deut. 9:21; Deut. 28:24; Deut. 32:24; Jos. 7:6; 1 Sam. 2:8; 2 Sam. 16:13; 2 Sam. 22:43; 1 Ki. 16:2; 1 Ki. 18:38; 1 Ki. 20:10; 2 Ki. 13:7; 2 Ki. 23:4; 2 Ki. 23:6; 2 Ki. 23:12; 2 Ki. 23:15; 2 Chr. 1:9; Neh. 4:2; Neh. 4:10; Job 2:12; Job 4:19; Job 5:6; Job 7:5; Job 7:21; Job 8:19; Job 10:9; Job 14:8; Job 14:19; Job 16:15; Job 17:16; Job 19:25; Job 20:11; Job 21:26; Job 22:24; Job 27:16; Job 28:2; Job 28:6; Job 30:6; Job 30:19; Job 34:15; Job 38:38; Job 39:14; Job 40:13; Job 41:33; Job 42:6; Ps. 7:5; Ps. 18:42; Ps. 22:15; Ps. 22:29; Ps. 30:9; Ps. 44:25; Ps. 72:9; Ps. 78:27; Ps. 102:14; Ps. 103:14; Ps. 104:29; Ps. 113:7; Ps. 119:25; Prov. 8:26; Eccl. 3:20; Eccl. 12:7; Isa. 2:10; Isa. 2:19; Isa. 25:12; Isa. 26:5; Isa. 26:19; Isa. 29:4; Isa. 34:7; Isa. 34:9; Isa. 40:12; Isa. 41:2; Isa. 47:1; Isa. 49:23; Isa. 52:2; Isa. 65:25; Lam. 2:10; Lam. 3:29; Ezek. 24:7; Ezek. 26:4; Ezek. 26:12; Ezek. 27:30; Dan. 12:2; Amos 2:7; Mic. 1:10; Mic. 7:17; Hab. 1:10; Zeph. 1:17; Zech. 9:3

**Brooks on ashes (apar)**—The word used here is apar but in vv. 9-10 the less frequently appearing synonym 'eper occurs. The word 'apar refers more often to dust (Nu 5:17), though it can be plaster (Lev. 14:45), rubble (2 Kings 23:12; Neh. 4:2), soil (Job 5:6), the earth (Job 41:33), and, as here, **ashes** (2 Kings 23:4). The word describes a human's lowly origins (Ge. 2:7; Ps. 103:14) and therefore aptly indicates humility in relation to God (Ge 18:27). It can also refer to one's final destiny (Job 7:21; 10:9)—also in contrast to God (Ge. 3:19)—and became a figure for the grave and death (Job 17:16; Ps 22:15, 29). It might be what was left after disaster and judgment (1 Kings 20:10; Ezek. 26:4). Perhaps because of its reference to **judgment, disaster, and human mortality**, it and the synonym 'eper became a **sign of repentance** (Job 42:6; Da 9:3) and grief when someone placed it on his head (Josh. 7:6), rolled in it (Mic. 1:10), sat in it (Isa. 47:1), figuratively "licked" it (Ps. 72:9), or wore it with sackcloth (Esther 4:1). It became a figure of humble origins (1 Sa 2:8) and a humiliating end (Job 16:15; 30:19). It also appeared as a figure meaning numerous (Gen. 28:14; Nu 23:10).

## SCRIPTURAL CHAIN ON "LIVING WATER"

**Scriptural Chain for Living (running, flowing) water** - The Hebrew phrase in each of the following passages is literally "'al-mayim hayyim" = "water living" and in the Lxx the word for "living" (Hebrew = hayyim) is translated with the verb **zoa** = to live. And so we see this beautiful phrase scattered from Genesis to Revelation. The beautiful phrase, **CHAY MAYIM**, "living water" occurs 1st in Ge 26:19 & then in Lv 14:5,6, 50, 51, 52, 15:13 > running water, Nu 19:17 > flowing water Song 4:15 > fresh water, Je 2:13 > living waters, Je17:13 > living water, Zec 14:8 > living waters from Jerusalem during 1000 YEAR reign of Messiah.

- First use = Ge 26:19 = "a well of living water" (Young's Literal)
- Lev 14:5-6, 50, 51, 52, Lev 15:13 = "running water"
- Nu 19:17 = "flowing water" > (healing waters associated with the ashes of the red heifer - Lxx = "*hudor zon* [present tense]" =

literally "water continually living")

- Song 4:15 = "fresh water"
- Jer 2:13 "living waters"
- Jer 17:13 = "living water"
- Zec 14:8 = "living waters" > living waters from Jerusalem during 1000 YEAR reign of Messiah. (see commentary)
- Jn 4:10 = "living water"
- Jn 4:14 = " well of water springing up to eternal life"
- Jn 7:38 "living water" (see commentary)
- Rev 7:17 = "springs of the water of life" (see [commentary](#))
- Rev 21:6 = "the spring of the water of life without cost" (see [commentary](#))
- Rev 22:1 = " river of the water of life" (see [commentary](#))
- Rev 22:17 = "take the water of life without cost." (see [commentary](#))

---

**LIVING WATER** - The Bible frequently pictures spiritual life as water.

- Jesus is the source of this living water

"Jesus answered her [the Samaritan woman], 'If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.'" John 4:10

- This living water reaches our deepest needs. Jesus said:

"Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." John 7:38+

- This living water is like a spring which never dries up:

"For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water." Revelation 7:17+

- This living water produces a fruitful life:

"On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." Revelation 22:2+ (The Gospel of John made easy)

---

### Our Daily Homily F B Meyer

For the unclean, they shall take ashes. (r.v.)

It was very easy to become unclean without realizing it. To touch a corpse, to be in the same room as the dead, to stumble over a grave, was enough to defile the Israelite, and excommunicate him from the Tabernacle with its holy rites. Could anything more graphically set forth the contagiousness of sin? We cannot be in contact with those who are dead in trespasses and sins, or breathe air defiled by their filthy speech, or read books which contain their thoughts, without suffering in some way by it.

This is the reason why, at the end of the day, we often feel unable to pray, or hold fellowship with God: we are excluded from the Most Holy Place, because of this defilement. Indeed, there is only one way of escaping it, and that is in being covered, hermetically sealed, by the Spirit of God. "In whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption" (see note Ephesians 4:30 - (Click word study on redemption - apolutrosis) (See also Spurgeon's sermons Particular Redemption, see Spurgeon's other sermons Plenteous Redemption, Full Redemption; Redemption Through Blood, the Gracious Forgiveness of Sins; Bought With a Price)

For this reason also, we should perpetually seek fresh cleansing in the precious blood of Christ. He is represented in this heifer without spot, slain in its prime, whose ashes were mingled in running water to testify their perpetual efficacy and freshness. If the ashes of an heifer availed for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ cleanse our consciences! Ask perpetually for the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, that you may have access with confidence into the Most Holy Place. The red heifer of Numbers answers to John 13. Let us apply the ashes and the water of purification to each other. Jesus said: "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet."

---

**Ray Pritchard on the Holy Spirit as Living Water** - Water is one of the most common symbols for the Holy Spirit in the Bible. Since water is indispensable for human life, the phrase "living water" is an apt metaphor for the Spirit's work in the human heart. Zechariah 14:8 looks forward to a time after the return of Christ when the climate and geography of earth will be changed as Jesus Christ sets up His kingdom on the earth. There will be a great earthquake, splitting the Mount of Olives in two (Zech 4:4), followed by enormous

changes in the normal pattern of daytime and nighttime (Zech 4:6–7). On that day “living water” will flow from Jerusalem. This is no doubt both literal and symbolic. There will be a literal river, but the river will symbolize the free flow of the Spirit throughout the entire earth. Jesus used this word picture in John 4 during His conversation with the woman at the well. Although she came seeking literal water, He promised to give her “living water” which would satisfy her thirst forever (John 4:10). That “living water” becomes a “spring of water” within the heart of the believer, welling up to eternal life. As the water rises rapidly in the well, it comes to the surface and flows over the edges. What a wonderful picture of how the Spirit works in the human heart. Those who come to Christ find “living water” that satisfies the deep thirst within. Through the indwelling Holy Spirit, that “living water” produces a new life that eventually bubbles to the surface and becomes evident to others. Living water won’t become stagnant. It always produces a dynamic, abundant, exciting new life. Water is also necessary for cleansing. Ephesians 5:26 pictures this aspect of the Spirit’s work when it mentions the “washing with water through the Word.” The Word is the cleansing agent; the Spirit is the cleansing power. As the Spirit applies the Word to our lives, we are cleansed from the stain of sin and the filth of the world. The Holy Spirit flows through believers like a mighty river of living water, bringing new life and providing deep, inner cleansing. As we yield ourselves to Christ, the abundance of His life (the “living water”) flows out to those around us. River of God, I live in a dry, barren land. All around me men and women die of thirst. Make me a channel of living water to those who desperately need it. Amen. ([Names of the Holy Spirit](#))

**Numbers 19:18** 'A clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it on the tent and on all the furnishings and on the persons who were there, and on the one who touched the bone or the one slain or the one dying naturally or the grave.

- Nu 19:9 Ps 51:7 Eze 36:25-27 Joh 15:2,3 17:17,19 1Co 1:30 Heb 9:14
- [Numbers 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



HYSSOP

## EXPLANATION OF THE MODE OF CLEANSING

**A clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it on the tent and on all the furnishings and on the persons who were there, and on the one who touched the bone or the one slain or the one dying naturally or the grave -**

This passage explains how a defiled person could be cleansed. They had to be cleansed by a ceremonially clean person (priest not required) who dipped **hyssop** in the water of purification and applied it to the tent and all who came in contact with the tent.

**Unger on grave** - Touching even a bone or grave defiled (19:16), so graves were whitewashed, to help people avoid inadvertent contact with them (Matt 23:27; Luke 11:44).

The use of hyssop played a vital role in Israel's emancipation from Egyptian bondage in the Passover...

Exodus 12:22+ “You shall take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood which is in the basin, and apply some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and the two doorposts; and none of you shall go outside the door of his house until morning.

**Hyssop** - 12x - Exod. 12:22; Lev. 14:4; Lev. 14:6; Lev. 14:49; Lev. 14:51; Lev. 14:52; Num. 19:6; Num. 19:18; 1 Ki. 4:33; Ps. 51:7; Jn. 19:29; Heb. 9:19

**Sprinkle** ([05137](#)) see note above on [nazah](#)

One is reminded of **Paul's** exhortation to the saints at Corinth...

(2 Cor 7:1+) Therefore, having these promises (2 Cor 6:14-18), beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all

defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting ([epiteleo](#) in present tense ~ progressive sanctification) holiness in the fear of God.

**Peter** gave a similar exhortation...

(1 Pe 1:14-16+) As obedient children, do not be conformed ([suschematizo](#) - in present tense ~ progressive sanctification to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 15 but like the Holy One who called you, **be** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) holy ([hagios](#)) yourselves (WE ARE HOLY IN POSITION AND NEED TO DAILY BY THE HOLY SPIRIT'S ENABLING POWER SEEK TO BE HOLY IN PRACTICE!0 also in all your behavior; 16 because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

**Numbers 19:19** 'Then the clean person shall sprinkle on the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he shall purify him from uncleanness, and he shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and shall be clean by evening.

- **shall sprinkle:** Eph 5:25-27 Titus 2:14 Titus 3:3-5 1Jn 1:7 2:1,2 Jude 1:23 Rev 1:5,6
- **on the seventh day:** Nu 19:12 31:19 Ge 2:2 Lev 14:9
- [Numbers 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Peter 1:2+ according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and **be sprinkled with His blood:** May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.

1 John 1:6-7+ If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7 but **if we walk in the Light** as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and **the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses** (present tense) us from all sin.

1 John 1:9+ If we confess (present tense) our sins, He is faithful and righteous **to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

### FINALLY CLEAN ON EVENING OF SEVENTH DAY

**Then the clean person shall sprinkle on the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day-** The clean person is the one handling the ashes with water and the paradox is if he touches the water of purification, he becomes unclean (cf Nu 19:21).

**Guzik** has an interesting note worth pondering noting that the "ashes of the red heifer (which the ingredients all speak of the work of Jesus on our behalf), combined with water (which speaks of the work of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit) combine together to bring cleansing. It can cleanse even the uncleanness brought about by death. All this cleansing is a precious picture; but the reality is in Jesus: For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:13-14)"

**and on the seventh day he shall purify him from uncleanness, and he shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and shall be clean by evening** - Process completed on seventh day.

**NET NOTE** on **shall purify him** - The construction uses a simple Piel of  $\text{כָּחַט$  (khata', "to purify") with a pronominal suffix—"he shall purify him." Some commentators take this to mean that after he sprinkles the unclean then he must purify himself. But that would not be the most natural way to read this form.

**Sprinkle** ([05137](#)) see note above on [nazah](#)

**Irving Jensen** - Legal defilement by contact with dead bodies, and the ceremonies of purification required, would be continual reminders to them that God would give the Canaan blessings only to those who were clean. The Christian today who would covet the blessings of "rest" in Christian living, of which the author of Hebrews speaks, must also see that such blessings come only to the undefiled, to those whose sins have been confessed and to whom the cleansing blood of Christ and purging Word of God have been applied and obeyed. (Ibid)

**Numbers 19:20** 'But the man who is unclean and does not purify himself from uncleanness, that person shall be cut off from the midst of the assembly, because he has defiled the sanctuary of the LORD; the water for impurity has not been sprinkled on him, he is unclean.

- **not:** Nu 19:13 15:30 Ge 17:14 Mk 16:16 Ac 13:39-41 Ro 2:4,5 2Pe 3:14 Rev 22:11
- [Numbers 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## UNCLEANNES DOES NOT JUST GO AWAY

**But the man who is unclean and does not purify himself from uncleanness, that person shall be cut off from the midst of the assembly, because he has defiled the sanctuary of the LORD; the water for impurity has not been sprinkled on him, he is unclean** - Just as the situation in Nu 19:13, this describes willful neglect and same penalty of being cut off (see [comments on verse 13](#)).

**Merrill** - This causes us to think of the New Testament warning against defiling the temple of the Lord, whether our physical body (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16) or the church body (Eph 2:21–22; 1 Pet 2:5). The new covenant means of purification, by the blood of Jesus Christ, protects us from that defilement. ([CBC-Nu](#))

**Numbers 19:21** 'So it shall be a perpetual statute for them. And he who sprinkles the water for impurity shall wash his clothes, and he who touches the water for impurity shall be unclean until evening.

- Lev 11:25,40 16:26-28 Heb 7:19 9:10,13,14 10:4
- [Numbers 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SPRINKLING VERSUS TOUCHING WATER OF PURIFICATION!

**So it shall be a perpetual statute for them**(cf Nu 19:10b+). **And he who sprinkles the water for impurity shall wash his clothes, and he who touches the water for impurity shall be unclean until evening** - This is a strange verse. Sprinkling the water of purification did not ceremonially defile but touching the water of purification paradoxically made one impure, defiled, unclean! This is the very "water" that was used to make the defiled person clean at 3 and 7 days! This is very strange! And if they were unclean, they had to remain outside the camp.

**Ashley** comments that " Any person who even touches the waters of impurity shall be unclean. This is because the purification offering absorbs the uncleanness of the one cleansed. Anyone who touches that one (i.e., the one who is unclean) becomes unclean, along with everything that the unclean one touches. This derivative or secondhand uncleanness is of the less serious variety; it is effective only until the evening and may be cleansed by scrubbing garments." (NICOT-Nu)

**Jamieson** has an interesting note - The opposite effects ascribed to the water of separation--of cleansing one person and defiling another--are very singular, and not capable of very satisfactory explanation. One important lesson, however, was thus taught, that its purifying efficacy was not inherent in itself, but arose from the divine appointment, as in other ordinances of religion, which are effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that administers them, but solely through the grace of God communicated thereby.

**NET NOTE** on **he who sprinkles** - The form has the conjunction with it: וּמַזְזֵה (umazzeah). The conjunction subordinates the following as the special law. It could literally be translated "and this shall be ... that the one who sprinkles."

**NET NOTE** on **until evening** - This gives the indication of the weight of the matter, for "until the evening" is the shortest period of ritual uncleanness in the Law. The problem of contamination had to be taken seriously, but this was a relatively simple matter to deal with—if one were willing to obey the Law.

**Sprinkle** ([05137](#)) see note above on [nazah](#)

**Numbers 19:22** 'Furthermore, anything that the unclean person touches shall be unclean; and the person who touches it shall be unclean until evening.'

- **anything that the unclean:** Lev 7:19 Hag 2:13
- **the person:** Lev 15:5 Mt 15:19,20 Mk 7:21-23
- [Numbers 19 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **PASSING ON ONE'S UNCLEANNES**

**Furthermore, anything that the unclean person touches shall be unclean; and the person who touches it shall be unclean until evening** - - When we are in sin (unclean) our lives can touch others and make them unclean (e.g., we lust, and entice them by vividly describing our lust to another person - be very cautious in accountability relationships to avoid any potentially defiling details!) "Uncleanness was easily transmitted, but cleanness had to be deliberately sought." (Guzik)

**THOUGHT-** The church today doesn't worry about external ritual uncleanness, but we should take to heart the lesson of this chapter that God wants us to be a holy people. We should "cleanse ourselves of all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1). God promises forgiveness and cleansing to His children if they turn from their sins and confess them to the Lord (1 John 1:9). An innocent animal had to die to provide ritual cleansing for the Jews, but the innocent Lamb of God had to die to provide cleansing for us (John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:18-23). (Wiersbe)